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INTO THE WILDERNESS

NEW TRICKS FOR HOUNDS AND HAWKS · 12 ARCANE PLANTS · 3 DEFILED MONSTERS

Dragon

ISSUE 357 · JULY 200

ALL HAIL DEMOGORGON

DEMON LORD OF BEASTS

3 NEW ABYSSAL VESTIGES

ECOLOGY OF THE TITAN

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Dragon

VOL. XXXII NUMBER 2

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Publisher: Erik Mona
Editor-in-Chief: Erik Mona
Senior Art Director: Sean Glenn
Art Director: Sarah Robinson
Managing Editor: Jason Bulmahn
Associate Editors: Mike McArtor and F. Wesley Schneider
Advertising & Marketing Director: Joshua J. Frost
Director of Operations: Jeff Alvarez
Prepress: James Davis
Circulation Director: Pierce Watters
For Wizards of the Coast: Rich Redman

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS
Peter Bergting, Rich Burlew, Eric Deschamps, Julie Dillon, Jason Engle, Andrew Hou, John Kovalic, Aaron Williams, James Zhang

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS
Keith Baker, Shelly Baur, William L. Christensen, Andy Collins, Mike L. Fiegel, Scott L. Gable, Ed Greenwood, Tim Hitchcock, James Jacobs, George Krashos, Nicolas Logue, Hal Maclean, Rick Miller, Scott Noel, Nicolas Quimby, Amber E. Scott

PAIZO PUBLISHING, LLC
2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200

Chief Executive Officer	Director of Operations
Lisa Stevens	Jeff Alvarez
Technical Director	Corporate Accountant
Vic Wertz	Dave Erickson

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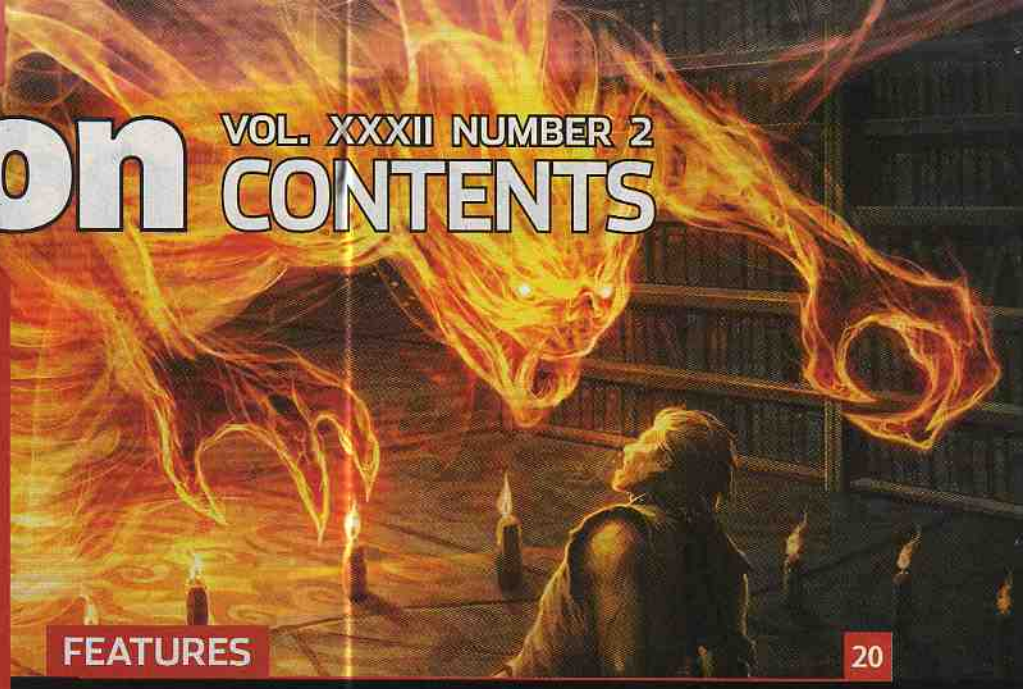

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CONTACT US!

Letters to the Editor: scalemail@paizo.com
Submissions: dragon@paizo.com
Subscriptions: paizo.com/dragon
Back Issues: paizo.com/dragon
Customer Service: customer.service@paizo.com
Sage Advice: sageadvice@paizo.com
Advertising: josh.frost@paizo.com

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THE LOCK DOWN

We get an enormous number of letters from prisoners.

In high school, I worked retail at the Mall of America, in Bloomington, Minnesota. The place had just opened and was a major attraction for locals and visitors alike. Planes ferried folk from as far as Japan on shopping excursions to the 450+-store monstrosity. It was packed to the rafters every day for months, and traffic remained steady for years. During my time working retail, I saw a staggeringly diverse group of customers. The sports memorabilia shop at which I worked (and later managed) attracted all types of clientele, from illiterate bumpkins to diamond-studded millionaires. I heard hundreds of languages and routinely encountered people with profound mental and physical disabilities.

Working in a mall sucked, to be certain, but it did open my eyes to the wide diversity of human life and experience. Prior to the Mall of America, I'd never seen a deaf person outside of *Sesame Street*, but in the store they visited often. My understanding of the world was made richer by the patrons of the Mall of America, and I'm grateful for it.

DRAGON receives several letters from prisoners every week. I renamed DUNGEON's mail column "Prison Mail" as an inside joke because of it. Part of the charm is that almost no one else sends letters. I get plenty of mail, but almost all of the hand-addressed envelopes are from guys on the inside.

There are thousands—probably tens of thousands—of prisoners playing DUNGEONS & DRAGONS right now. Just like in the military, the game has a strong hold anywhere groups of young men are trapped with a lot of free time. We get letters asking for campaign advice, letters apologizing for implicating D&D in crimes committed in the 80s at the height of the gaming scare, and letters with questions, criticisms, and praise of the latest issue—or sometimes an issue from months or even years ago.

Almost all of the friendly, hand-written letters praise the positive impact DUNGEONS & DRAGONS has made on their lives. These men are extremely bored, and D&D offers them a brief respite from their dull punishment. I get a strong sense that a "brief respite" means a lot more to these guys than it does to me.

I get a sense, honestly, that there are too many people in prison in this country.

A few years ago, our former publisher Johnny Wilson wrote an editorial in DRAGON decrying the difficulty of serving the magazines' incarcerated subscribers. Each state has its own regulations for what is and isn't okay to send a prisoner, and honestly a lot of the time it seems like they deny stuff just to screw with the inmates. One guy's DUNGEON got sent back to us because "product contained maps."

The readers went ballistic. Paizo's message boards and letter columns overflowed with angry readers who just couldn't understand how Johnny could care at all about the rights of criminals, angrily declaring that prisoners shouldn't have access to games or anything fun at all.

The reaction struck me as utterly without compassion, and I think part of my disconnect has to do with all the prison mail. When all you know about prison comes from dirty jokes and *Oz*, it's easy to vilify prisoners as a homogenous mass of evil, but getting all these letters—reading their honest pleas, their thanks for a hobby we all share and love—going through that experience has personalized the issue for me. My interactions with incarcerated Americans expanded my understanding of another aspect of American culture, and for that I'm grateful.

It's been a pleasure, these last few years, to bring DRAGON to all our readers, no matter where they find themselves. Now if you'll excuse me, I have some letters to read.

ERIK

Erik Mona
Editor-in-Chief
erikm@paizo.com

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SCALE MAIL

Tell us what you think of this issue. Send an email to **scalemail@paizo.com**. Please include your name, city, and state.

It didn't take long for news of DRAGON *and* DUNGEON*'s looming end to spread across the Internet. By the end of the first day after the announcement, hundreds of passionate letters jammed our in-boxes with questions, comments, and memories of these fine magazines. At press time, only avid online readers even know about the end of the magazines, so there will be a lot more where these came from once last issue's editorial hits non-Internet readers. We've selected some of the most interesting letters, and look forward to hearing from all our readers. It's been a pleasure to publish* DRAGON *and* DUNGEON *these last 5 years, and it's great to see the powerful emotional connection our readers have to the magazines. We've been reading them for decades, too, and will cast the same wistful glances in the direction of the mailbox every month come September. So, while it's a little early to start a wake for the magazines, it's not too early to sit around the fire and share some stories and memories about our great friends* DRAGON *and* DUNGEON*. I used to think it was strange that I had such a strong connection to these magazines, but reading your letters reassures me that I've been far from alone these 31 years. Thanks for keeping in touch, and thanks for reading.*

SAYING GOODBYE

What can be said that won't have been said in a hundred other email and letters that you'll receive?

DRAGON magazine has been like an old friend over the years. When I first started out, I had no idea what was involved in this strange hobby of ours, but DRAGON and DUNGEON were there to show me what could be done, how it could be done, and what really shouldn't be done. I remember Sage Advice answering questions before I could ask them. I remember Campaign Classics, showing me the rich history of D&D and later showing me old haunts that I had forgotten. I remember Bard on the Run—who could forget? I remember tracking through several newsagents in order to find the next issue (it's always been hard to find in the UK). I remember the Marvel Phile. I remember Floyd, Nodwick, Dork Tower, and how they went on to better things. I remember the Dragon Project and Eye of the Monitor. I remember Larry Elmore covers.

I'll always remember DRAGON.

Matthew Palmer
Chester, UK

THANK YOU AND FARE THEE WELL

I have eagerly checked my mailbox every day for nearly a decade, even the day after receiving an issue, for my next issue of DRAGON. Let's be honest here, not every issue was a gem, but I read every one, cover to cover, and I enjoyed them. Sure, online content is great. At this point, I've scanned most of my DRAGONS onto my computer. It makes it easier to carry them to game day. But I want the hardcopies. I like to sit on my couch and peruse the latest issue while my wife complains about who kissed who on *Grey's Anatomy*. I like to have five issues open at once, piled one on top of the other, while I cross reference two spells, a prestige class, a magic item, and a feat. That's part of gaming. Tabletop gaming requires you to have things on your tabletop, not just on your laptop. Of course, one rant from me won't even get noticed by Wizards of the Coast, but I felt it was necessary to speak up on behalf of the magazines that I have enjoyed for so long. I can only hope this will provide Paizo time to produce additional DRAGON *Compendiums*.

To Paizo I have to say: "Thank you."

Thank you in advance for continuing to put out great content in your final issues.

Thank you for the wealth of options offered to those of us with (lots of) subscription time left: I'm already having trouble deciding between *Pathfinder* and some of your GameMastery products.

Thank you for great comics. I always had trouble making myself wait until the end of the issue to read them.

Thank you for Monster Ecologies, Class Acts, Bazaar of the Bizarre, Silicon Sorcery, Winning Races, Spellcraft, Sage Advice, Demonomicon of Iggwilv, First Watch, Core Beliefs, Novel Approach, excellent short stories, and all the other articles and columns you've given us over the years.

CAVE TROLL CONTEST WRAP-UP

DRAGON TALK

Right now cave trolls have been loosed after Riley Rodda of Tacoma, Washington; Sean Frazier of Columbia, Montana; Avrilyn Czinczky of Wausau, Wisconsin; Darvin Martin of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Christoper Love of Winnipeg, Manitoba. These four lucky winners of last March's Cave Troll Contest each snagged a copy of Fantasy Flight Games's (**fantasyflightgames.com**) new board game, *Cave Troll*. Thanks to everyone who entered and look on the next page for an all new contest!

ORC WARS CONTEST

DRAGON TALK

Sound the drums of war and ready for battle, the Orc Wars have begun! *HeroCard Orc Wars*, by TableStar Games, pits two players against one another in a fantasy board game of daring and strategy. This month, TableStar Games and DRAGON are giving one grand-prize winner, five second-prize winners, and ten third-prize winners a chance to properly prepare for the *Orc Wars* with a treasure trove of HeroCard loot.

Grand Prize: A full-length, replica vinyl sword of the Orc Cleaver from *HeroCard Orc Wars*, a copy of *HeroCard Orc Wars*, and the *HeroCard Orc Wars Sorceress* expansion.

Second Prize: A copy of *HeroCard Orc Wars*.

Third Prize: A copy of the *HeroCard Orc Wars Sorceress* expansion.

All you have to do to enter is send an e-mail to **contest@paizo.com** with your name, address, and the subject line "Orc Wars Contest" by August 1st. We'll choose and announce all the winners on **paizo.com** in October. So, write in or check out more ways to win with TableStar's other "Win Real Loot" contests at **tablestargames.com**.

Thank you, most of all, for two excellent magazines, and many excellent years.

You will be sorely missed.

Jason
Clinton Township, MI

THE END

I have been an avid fan of D&D for most of my life. I remember being terrified of the beholder on the AD&D *Monster Manual* when I was 5, and I remember my first game at my 7th birthday party. Now, at age 13, I am DMing my own missions full of more slaadi and secret cults than you can shake a *+1 quarterstaff* at, and when I heard that DUNGEON and DRAGON were to stop being mailed, I felt like an iron golem in a room full of rust monsters. As I look through the first DUNGEON adventures ("Huddle Farm" is still my favorite. Huzzah for green cows!) I think of how much I will miss you guys. I was kind of hoping that you would go out with a bang. I know DUNGEON has the end of the Savage Tide Adventure Path (another huzzah for pirates), but what are you guys doing? I've loved all your articles (particularly the one on Dagon) and I would like to know what happens next. Will every little thing be online now? What about fourth edition on the horizon?

Will Shattuc
Oakland, CA

The few hints I've received about what Wizards of the Coast plans to do with DRAGON *and* DUNGEON *online suggest that the new version of these magazines will include a lot of great content that will be geared directly at existing* DRAGON *readers, but it'll be a while before they're ready to share full details. We'll try to show off a more formal preview of their offerings in these pages before we go "offline" ourselves.*

We do indeed plan to go out with a bang in a super-spectacular oversized issue with a cover by Larry Elmore, the return of Phil and Dixie, at least one giant poster map, another foray into the haunted pages of the Demonomicon of Iggwilv, *a look at the greatest villains of D&D, another visit with the Wizards Three, and the final battle between Elminster and Raistlin, courtesy of a couple long-time readers named Ed Greenwood and Margaret Weis. Seriously. You're not going to want to miss this one. It's history in the making!—Erik Mona*

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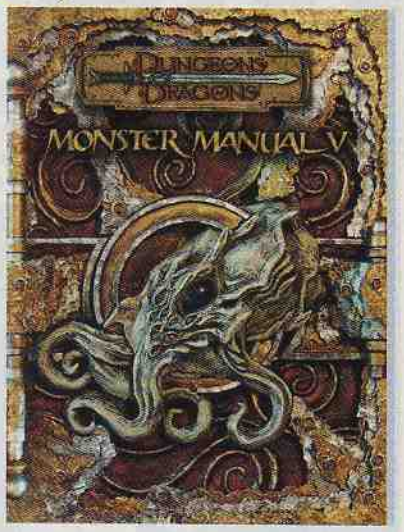
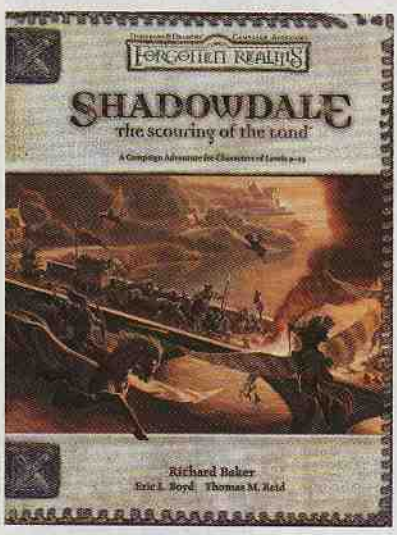
NEW RELEASES



"Just give me your three best monsters!" That's what Wizards of the Coast's top monster-wrangler, Dave Noonan, asked a horde of freelancers. And the top monsters is what he got. *Monster Manual V* includes more than a hundred original monsters, striking a balance between fun-to-run and totally deadly creatures, each designed to create memorable encounters for players. All creature types are represented, with extra attention paid to assure it contains beasties of every CR. More than just monsters, though, there are new races, details on how to run encounters, and everything else you need to challenge adventuring parties of every level.



Revolutionaries needed! The most famous town in all the Realms, Shadowdale, needs freedom fighters to overthrow its Zhentarim oppressors. Authors Eric L. Boyd, Thomas M. Reid, and Richard Baker lead adventurers through the dale's most famous sites, like the Dread Lair of Alokkair and the ruin of Castle Krag, in a heroic adventure to free this legendary locale. Baker hints that the "Climatic scenes are very *Zorro*, very *Star Wars*." The second in a trilogy, with strong links to *Cormyr* and the upcoming *Anauroch*, *Shadowdale* can be run as part of a sweeping campaign, or independently, for 7th–11th level characters.

Following in the footsteps of last Fall's *Neverwinter Nights 2*, Obsidian Entertainment has announced an expansion for the PC game: *Neverwinter Nights 2: Mask of the Betrayer*. A direct sequel building upon the events in *Neverwinter Nights 2*, this new volume takes players across the FORGOTTEN REALMS, facing new foes and adventures in the Underdark, Thay, and beyond. All of the new dungeons and monster models can also be used to make your own epics in the game's powerful adventure editor. While *Mask of the Betrayer* is planned for release later this year, check out more details on the expansion in our in-depth look at the game coming in DRAGON #359

NEXT MONTH IN DRAGON #358

CORE BELIEFS: SAINT CUTHBERT
by Sean K Reynolds
Submit to the faith of Saint Cuthbert of the Cudgel, god of discipline, truth, and wisdom. Learn the ways of his stern faith and zealous clergy. The word of the Cudgel is the law, and the word must be spread so that all may benefit from his wisdom.

CHECKMATE
by Kevin Baase and Eric Jansing
Drawn from four of DRAGON's best-known covers, six new creatures bring the cold strategy of the chessboard to life. Face powerful foes like the black king or take command of an entire chess legion for the ultimate battle of wits.

THE MASTER'S FORGE
by Rodney Thompson
Learn the tricks of masters of the trade and create equipment worthy of the word "masterwork."

PLUS
The Ecology of the Kaorti, Volo's Guide, Dragonmarks, Savage Tidings, Class Acts, Comics—including Order of the Stick—and more!

reported by Shelly Baur, William Christensen, and Mike L. Fiegel

CRAZED GAMERS, UNITE!

One of the longest running independent DUNGEONS & DRAGONS tournaments celebrates its 27th Anniversary at GenCon Indy this August: NASCRAG, the NAtional Society of CRAzed Gamers.

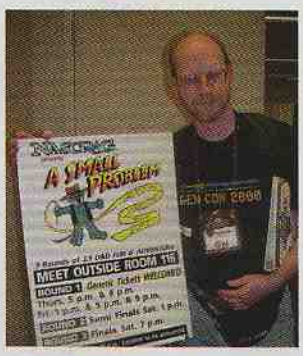
"Cheesy accents are not only allowed, they are encouraged," said Dave Mitchard of NASCRAG. But while the players (in teams of six) are encouraged to ham it up, the judges–some of whom are the children of NASCRAGers from 1980—take the material more seriously.

"Anyone who has played in a large event has encountered a judge or two who seems to have barely read the material–not so with NASCRAG," said Mitchard, adding that the two-dozen NASCRAG judges play and provide feedback on the adventure long before they run it.

This year, NASCRAG presents *A Little Revenge*, a three round, single-elimination tournament hosted by actor Tom Lommel (*Fear of Girls*) and features illustrations by Bill Cavalier (*DRAGON, Knights of the Dinner Table*).

"If you don't have six players, NASCRAG will find you a team, or make up a new one," said Mitchard. "And don't worry if you haven't pre-registered. NASCRAG has plenty of judges and runs multiple first round sessions—seats will be available."

For more details, visit **nascrag.org**.



All photos by Julianne Brand

INTO THE NIGHT BELOW

Dangers beyond reasoning lurk in the *Night Below*, the newest expansion of *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Miniatures* hitting store shelves this month. Dragons, fiends, and worse haunt the darkness, along with dozens of denizens of D&D's ultimate, endless dungeon, the Underdark. Aside from tons of Small and Medium-sized miniatures, several titanic terrors push the limits of what it means to be size Large, intimidating minis beyond the boarders of their bases, like the Greater Barghest, Cerebrilith, and frigid Large White Dragon. Check out **wizards.com/minis** for more previews of this set's delve into the deadly depths, as well as silhouette teasers of numerous minis, with more revealed every Thursday.

Greater Barghest

Cerebrilith

Large White Dragon

SCION OF LEGEND

In White Wolf's new *Scion* RPG, you play the child of a god and defend humanity from the mythical titans. *Scion: Hero*, the first book in the set, introduced more than fifty deities of various pantheons from mythic Earth (from Egyptian to Aztec and many in between), with each granting his progeny different abilities and powers. In *Scion: Demigod* (releasing this month), characters move from their mortal lives to demi-godhood, and are able to begin traveling to extra-dimensional realms. Check in on **white-wolf.com** for more on Scion and their upcoming project *Scion: God*.

A FAERY GOOD TALE

Firefly Games and Green Ronin Publishing are set to release a new deluxe edition of the Origins Award-nominated *Faery's Tale*, prepared to debut at this year's Gen Con Indy. The new edition of the interactive storytelling game includes 32 pages of new material, yet remains suitable for gamers ages 6 and up, focusing on family friendly and often whimsical roleplaying.

"This is a game parents can play with their kids," said Green Ronin President Chris Pramas. "It's a perfect introduction to roleplaying."

For more information, visit Firefly Games online at **firefly-games.com**.

ICE AND FIRE, AGAIN

Green Ronin Publishing (**greenronin.com**) and George R.R. Martin have reached an agreement to publish a new RPG based on Martin's acclaimed fantasy epic, *A Song of Ice and Fire*. The RPG is slated for a 2008 release, with plans for supplements exploring more of the world and characters of the popular fantasy series.

"*A Song of Ice and Fire* is the most exciting thing to happen in fantasy fiction in decades," said Green Ronin President Chris Pramas. "We're thrilled to be able to bring it back to the gaming world."

"I think my fans and readers will be pleased," added author George R.R. Martin.

FALL OF DRAGONS

This month, McFarlane Toys (**spawn.com**) introduces its newest set in the ongoing *Fall of the Dragon Kingdom* series of incredibly detailed dragon models. Each of the figures is approximately 6 inches tall (the perfect size for use as a D&D dragon miniatures) and expertly painted. The set includes the bestial-looking Hunter Dragon, an Ice Dragon complete with sorceress, the lanky Scavenger Dragon hovering over desert ruins, an armored Warrior Dragon, and the skeletal, fiery-maned Fossil Dragon. All five dragons are available at hobby stores now.

THIS MONTH IN DUNGEON #148

THE AUTOMATIC HOUND

by James Lafond Sutter

A murderous beast stalks the streets of a quiet farm town. Can the PCs unravel the secret of Dramsburg's dark past and defeat a monster that cannot be killed? A D&D adventure for 3rd-level characters.

IN THE SHADOWS OF SPINECASTLE

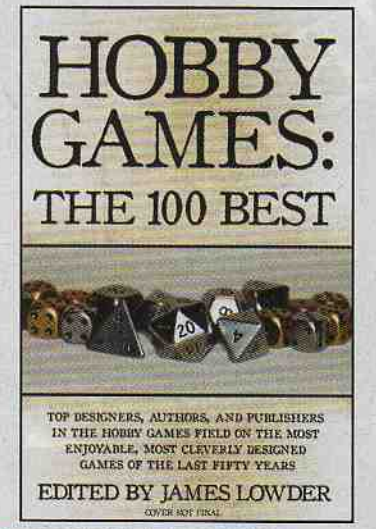
by Stephen S. Greer and Gary Holian

The PCs must infiltrate a city ruled by monsters in search of a spymaster who might hold the key to saving a beseiged nation. A GREYHAWK adventure for 9th-level characters.

WELLS OF DARKNESS

by Eric Boyd

The Prince of Demons hides a secret—one that could well be the key to stopping the savage tide. Yet the only one who knows the chink in Demogorgon's armor is imprisoned on one of the most notorious realms in all the Abyss. Will the price for rescuing her be too high? A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 18th-level characters.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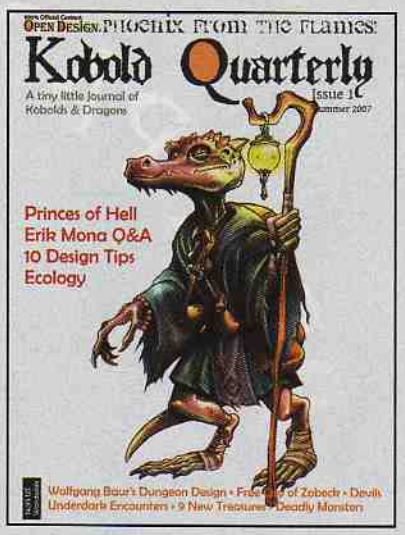
THE BEST OF THE BEST

Next month's Gen Con Indy sees the publication of Green Ronin's *Hobby Games: The 100 Best*, a 400-page collection of personal essays from authors, designers, and gaming celebrities about the 100 best games of all time. One hundred different writers, including Gary Gygax, Steve Jackson, Richard Garfield, and many more of the industry's most influential and outspoken designers, authors, and publishers lend their insights on their favorite games. "The range of games the writers chose was terrific," said editor James Lowder. "The essays cover some titles that are familiar to everyone, but many others that will be revelations."

For more information, visit **greenronin.com**.

ENNIES AT INDY

The ENnies ceremony, sponsored at next month's Gen Con Indy by **yourgamesnow.com**, awards publishers, game designers, artists, and others who create the best in tabletop RPGs. This year marks the seventh anniversary of the awards, and includes several new categories. "Five elected fandom judges create a list of five products for each of the categories (new categories include podcast, software, miniatures, and others), then gamers from around the world cast their votes in the last half of July," said ENnies organizer Denise Robinson. "We've made big strides in being increasingly inclusive of all gamers and games, as the lists of nominees and winners illustrates." Head over to **ennieawards.com** to cast your vote!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A tiny little Journal of Kobolds & Dragons
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KOBOLD QUARTERLY

As cunning as his mascot monster, gaming industry veteran Wolfgang Baur presents a tightly focused e-zine, *Kobold Quarterly*. "We're a tiny little reptile instead of a mighty dragon," says Baur. "We have excellent ambush skills." The small but fierce 'zine will cover both D&D and Lovecraftian horror. Wolfgang's popular dungeon and DMing advice column will find a new home in *Kobold Quarterly*, together with player advice, design tips, and interviews with top game designers and artists like DRAGON editor-in-chief Erik Mona and fan-favorite artist Wayne Reynolds (featured in issue #1). With its electronic form, subscribers can request content directly through frequent polls and feedback. Preview *Kobold Quarterly* at **wolfgangbaur.com**.

RPGA REPORT *by Chris Tulach*

Recently, we've gathered a lot of feedback on the RPGA presence at our major shows (like Gen Con Indy and D&D Experience). One of the main concerns voiced was that the RPGA's content didn't feel as "special" as it was in times past. While some will simply chalk it up to the nostalgia of the "good 'ol days," we did take a long, hard look at what we offered convention-goers to see if there was something we could do to enhance our offerings at our shows.

The first thing we noticed is that there wasn't enough that was RPGA exclusive at the show—most players could wait a short time and just play the adventures at home. Thus, we decided to add things like exclusive special benefits to some adventures—for example, the Undermountain Adventures mini-campaign (running at Origins and Gen Con Indy) gives you the opportunity to earn special certificates to apply to your XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS or LIVING GREYHAWK character. While you will be able to play the Undermountain Adventures mini-campaign at home, if you have a character in one of our other campaigns, you'll want to make it a priority at the show, since the certificates are only available there. Other exclusive benefits at Gen Con Indy this year include new promo campaign cards and the opportunity to take home your very own shield (yes, a full-sized metal shield) from a GREYHAWK region!

Stop by and visit us at the rest of the big shows happening this year, including Origins, Gen Con Indy, Penny Arcade Expo, Gen Con UK, and Spring Revel Down Under, or online at **wizards.com/rpga.**

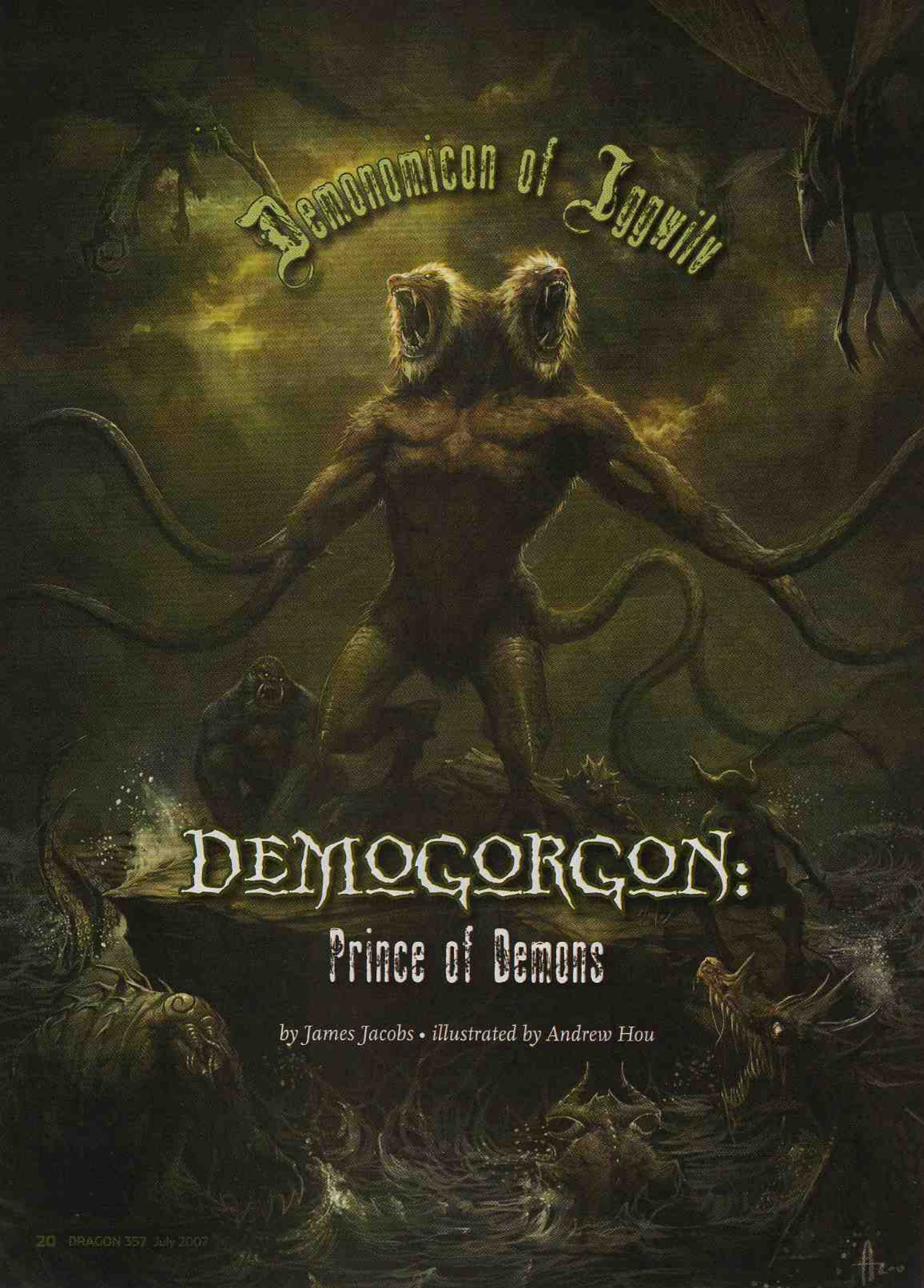
BLUE DRAGON™

Blue Dragon brings the incredible creative works of *Final Fantasy's* original designer, Hironobu Sakaguchi; artist and *Dragon Ball Z* creator, Akira Toriyama; and *Final Fantasy's* famed composer, Nobuo Uematsu, together this fall to create an epic RPG for the Xbox 360. Arguably the first 360-exclusive RPG to get excited about, the game focuses on a boy named Shu and his companions, who possess the ability to control shadows, using their powers to combat an ancient and evil people who possess long-forgotten magical abilities. Our heroes travel through the many ancient ruins of their world, braving mysteries and perils, while creating and customizing their unique forms of shadow magic.

On the technical front, new animating techniques add to the game's incredible art, allowing usually stagnant RPG characters to react to a vast variety of situations. And, with Akira Toriyama leading the character design, the graphics are, not surprisingly, reminiscent of the ground-breaking anime *Dragon Ball Z*.

Aside from drawing upon the talents of some of the best-known artists in Japanese gaming, *Blue Dragon* holds a lot of appeal for D&D players. Aside from the usual monster-fighting, ruin-exploring action, both the game's customizable characters and magic system are sure to appeal to the min-maxer in ever tabletop RPG player. The near endless hordes of animated monsters, many inspired by familiar legends—and sometimes seemingly from D&D itself—make familiar opponents for monster lovers of all stripes.

Blue Dragon releases for the Xbox 360 next month, with an animated series based on the game debuting from VIZ Media soon after.



DEMOGORGON:
Prince of Demons

by James Jacobs • illustrated by Andrew Hou

There was an era in the Abyss before the tanar'ri. This was the time of the obyriths, and until one of their number—a self-styled Queen of Chaos whose true name has been stricken from time—gathered their numbers and marched in a war on the multiverse, the obyriths ruled the Abyss. They were content in their place, after a fashion, and the rest of existence was content to leave them to their secretive evils. Among them were the obyrith lords, demons of vast power that were the mouthpieces of the Abyss itself. Some of these demon lords were more powerful than the others, but most powerful of them all was their prince, the first to rise from the primal matter of chaos and evil—Obox-ob.

So when the Queen of Chaos marched upon the multiverse, her first act was to strike against this prince. It was the sheer audacity of the move that ensured her victory—although powerful in her own right, she paled in comparison to the Primal Chaos that was the first Prince of Demons. None had attempted such an attack, and before Obox-ob was able to retaliate, he had been slain—all that remained was a single aspect that managed to slink off into the depths of the Abyss to hide. The remaining obyrith lords were shocked at the development, and many of them fell to the queen's side rather than risk the wrath of one capable of slaughtering the mightiest of them all. As mortal life appeared and their souls came to the Abyss, the Queen of Chaos was among the first to cultivate and nurture this new brand of evil. For as they grew, they transformed into a new breed of demon—the tanar'ri.

The first of these new demons was a twisted, deformed abortion of evil with boneless arms, twin simian heads, reptilian legs, and a twisted tail—a snapping, howling, and ultimately uncontrollable monster formed from the primal fears of mortal souls. The Queen of Chaos tossed this creature aside, and those that came after were less broken. Succubi formed from mortal lust. Glabrezu from mortal envy. Alkiliths from sloth. And more, and more. And as the tanar'ri grew, the obyriths called upon their greatest fleshwarpers, the sibriexes, to adjust and transform them more. Before long, the tanar'ri had grown to rival the obyriths in variety and specialty.

The most powerful of these was Miska the Wolf Spider, and when he matured to a demon lord to rival many of the obyrith lords of old, the Queen of Chaos crowned him the new Prince of Demons and marched upon the outer multiverse. Yet although the Queen of Chaos had timed her assault on Obox-ob to perfection, such was not the case this time. She had underestimated the balancing forces of law, and her armies were destroyed. Miska was stripped of his crown and imprisoned, and the queen was forced to flee into hiding in a remote Abyssal realm called the Steaming Fen. Thrown into disarray, the surviving obyriths were set upon from without by the eladrin host (which was eager to take advantage of their defeat in an attempt to cleanse the Abyss of their taint) and from within by their own slaves, the tanar'ri (who rose up in rebellion, sensing that the Abyss was prepared to shift its support to their race).

> Should feckless mortal seek to test His ire,
> Take heed of better foes than you now shamed—
> FRAZ-URB'LUU, who would take His name in vain:
> His wrath shall haunt your lands and wipe them clean.
> AZUVIDEXUS, who would dwell within His house:
> He'll vex the gods themselves to cast you out.
> ZUREGUREX, who would seek to claim His prize:
> Your storm-strewn dead shall not avail your flight.
> SHAMI-AMOURAE, who seeks His lust to build a throne:
> To the darkest wash of primal night be sent.
> ORCUS, who brings His armies forth to bear:
> Your troops shall end upon red fang and claw.
> GRAZ'ZT, who deigns to claim His vaunted crown:
> Your triple realm shall rot from deep within.
> OBOX-OB, who once ruled where He rules now:
> Your crown now rests upon the proper brow.
> For you are but His pawns and He your prince,
> And in the end but thralls to His demesne.
> —from The Prophecies of Ahmon-Ibor

In a fraction of the time it had taken for them to grow to power, the obyriths were exiled to the corners of the Abyss and lordship of the realm passed to the tanar'ri. For many ages, these heritors of the Abyss bickered over who could claim the title of Prince of Demons. Two particularly powerful tanar'ri rapidly rose to prominence, and all soon knew that it would be either Orcus or Graz'zt who would claim the prize. And yet, in their struggles against each other, neither saw the strange and deformed shadow approaching from the wet and forgotten depths of the Abyss.

For in the shadow of planar wars and the rise of new races that first, malformed accident had grown strong. None were prepared for his arrival and none could withstand his power when he claimed the title Prince of Demons for his own. Dozens of the most powerful tanar'ri lords assaulted this new form, eager to put him down, but one after another they fell, their bodies rotting and life forces shattered. In moments, the new Prince of Demons reduced the number of tanar'ri lords by a dozen, and those who survived knew they stood in the shadow of true power. Even mighty Orcus and Graz'zt were forced to kneel, their resources spent from their own wars against one another. For standing before them in all his terrible glory was the first, the primal tanar'ri, and while the demon host rankled and roared at his arrival, none dared raise fist or claw against the new prince.

Demogorgon had claimed his throne.

ABOUT THE STATS

The statistics for the CR 33 version of Demogorgon presented here were generated by advancing and adapting his basic statistics from the CR 23 version detailed in *Fiendish Codex I: Hordes of the Abyss*, with a few additional benefits here and there. If your campaign needs an even tougher Prince of Demons, you can advance Demogorgon's statistics even further, either using the method presented in *Fiendish Codex I* or the standard rules for advancing outsiders detailed in the *Monster Manual*.

DEMOGORGON, PRINCE OF DEMONS

The demon towers a full eighteen feet in height, his body at once sinuous like that of a snake and powerful like that of a great ape. Two baleful baboon heads leer from atop his lumbering shoulders, from which writhe two long tentacles. His lower torso is saurian, like some great reptile with an immense forked tail. The air itself around his frame seems to ripple with fear from his proximity.

DEMOGORGON **CR 33**

CE Huge outsider (aquatic, chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Listen +48, Spot +48

Aura demonic command (120 ft.), *unholy aura* (spell in effect)

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Common; telepathy 300 ft.

AC 59, touch 23, flat-footed 44; Dodge, Mobility
(–2 size, +11 Dex, +32 natural, +4 armor, +4 deflection)

hp 869 (37 HD); fast healing 20; **DR** 20/cold iron, epic, and good

Immune electricity, petrification, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 46

Fort +42, **Ref** +35, **Will** +32

Spd 50 ft., fly 60 ft. (good), swim 50 ft.

Melee* 2 tentacles +46 (1d8+31 plus rot) and 2 bites +44 (2d6+23) and tail slap +44 (2d6+23 plus energy drain)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +37; **Grp** +61

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dark Speech, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack

Special Actions dual action, gaze, *summon demon*, *symbol*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 25th)

At will—*astral projection*, *blasphemy*, *charm monster* (DC 25), *contagion* (DC 25), *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *fly*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater magic fang*, *greater teleport*, *plane shift* (DC 28), *project image*, *shapechange*, *sticks to snakes***, *telekinesis* (DC 26), *unhallow*, *unholy aura* (DC 29), *unholy blight* (DC 25)

3/day—quickened *feeblemind* (DC 26), *gate*, quickened *greater dispel magic*, *heal*, *power word stun*

1/day—*dominate monster* (DC 30), *weird* (DC 30)

*10-point Power Attack, *greater magic fang* (+5) on all natural weapons

**see DRAGON #317

Abilities Str 42, Dex 32, Con 46, Int 30, Wis 26, Cha 32

SQ amphibious, item master, mage armor

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dark Speech*, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness**, Mobility, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*feeblemind*, *greater dispel magic*), Spring Attack

Skills Bluff +51, Concentration +58, Diplomacy +59, Hide +43, Intimidate +55, Jump +64, Knowledge (arcana) +50, Knowledge (history) +50, Knowledge (nature) +50, Knowledge (religion) +50, Knowledge (the planes) +50, Listen +48, Move Silently +51, Search +50, Sense Motive +48, Spellcraft +54, Spot +48, Swim +64

*Dark Speech is a feat from *Fiendish Codex I*. If you don't have access to this book, replace this feat with Awesome Blow.

**Improved Toughness grants +1 hit point per Hit Die.

True Seeing (Su) Demogorgon has the effects of *true seeing* constantly active; this ability cannot be dispelled.

Aura of Demonic Command (Su) As the Prince of Demons, Demogorgon exudes an aura of demonic command to a radius of 120 feet. With a few exceptions, no demons within this area can take any action without Demogorgon's permission. Demogorgon reflexively grants permission to act on the demon's turn. An affected demon in this area must make a DC 39 Will save whenever he attempts to take any action that Demogorgon does not permit. Success indicates that he may take the action, while failure means the demon not only loses that action but also takes 2d6 points of Charisma damage as Demogorgon's wrath tears into his mind. Demons within the area that Demogorgon is not aware of may act as they will, as can any demon with the Abyss-Bound Soul feat keyed to any other demon lord (although Demogorgon automatically recognizes rival Abyss-Bound Souls as soon as they enter his aura of demonic command). The Abyss-Bound Soul feat is detailed in *Fiendish Codex I: Hordes of the Abyss*. Demon lords are not affected by Demogorgon's aura of Demonic Command. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Rot (Su) Any living creature touched by Demogorgon's tentacles must succeed on a DC 46 Fortitude save or its flesh and bones rot away. The creature takes 1d8 points of Constitution damage immediately and 2 points of Constitution damage every hour thereafter until it dies or a *remove disease* spell is cast. This spell stops further damage only if the caster makes a DC 30 Caster Level check. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Energy Drain (Su) Any living creature hit by Demogorgon's tail slap gains 1d6 negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, Demogorgon heals 5 points of damage. If the amount of healing is more than the damage he has taken, he gains any excess as temporary hit points. A DC 46 Fortitude save removes these negative levels. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Dual Action (Ex) Demogorgon, having two heads with distinct intelligences and personalities, can take two

rounds' worth of actions in any given round, as if he were two creatures.

Gaze (Su) Each of Demogorgon's heads has its own gaze attack. Any creature within 30 feet of the demon lord must make two successful DC 39 Will saving throws each round at the beginning of its turn, the first save against Demogorgon's beguiling gaze and the second one against his insanity gaze. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Demogorgon can actively target foes with his beguiling gaze and insanity gaze, in which case each gaze requires a standard action to activate. As a standard action, he may lock the gazes of both heads on a single target and use a special hypnosis effect. He cannot use his hypnosis gaze during the same round in which he uses his beguiling gaze, his insanity gaze, or both.

Beguiling Gaze: The gaze attack of Aameul, Demogorgon's left head, is the equivalent of a *charm monster* spell.

Insanity Gaze: The gaze attack of Hethradiah, Demogorgon's right head, is the equivalent of an *insanity* spell.

Hypnosis Gaze: Only a target with 15 Hit Dice or more is allowed a save to avoid the gaze of both Demogorgon's heads. Those who succumb to this gaze are affected as though by a *hypnotism* spell.

***Summon Demon* (Sp)** Demogorgon can summon demons to his side to serve him, using a variant of most tanar'ri's *summon tanar'ri* spell-like ability. He can summon any number of demons with this ability as a standard action, as long as all the demons summoned are of the same type—if Demogorgon wishes to summon a succubus and a nalfeshnee, he'll need to use this ability two separate times. He can summon up to 90 Hit Dice of demons per day with this ability. Although he can summon any type of demon (including loumaras, obyriths, and demons without a subrace), he cannot summon unique demons or demon lords using this ability. This ability is the equivalent of a 9th-level spell (CL 20th).

***Symbol* (Sp)** Demogorgon can cast any *symbol* spell once per day as a spell-like ability.

Constant Spell-Like Abilities Since he can use *fly*, *unholy aura*, and *greater magic fang* at will as spell-like abilities, these spells are always in effect when he's encountered. The effects of these spells and spell-like abilities are included in the stat block above.

Item Master (Ex) Demogorgon can use any magic item, even spell completion items such as wands or scrolls. He can also create any magic item or construct as though he had the necessary feats and prerequisite spells or other requirements.

Mage Armor (Su) Demogorgon is constantly surrounded by an aura of force that provides armor protection identical to a *mage armor* spell that cannot be dispelled.

Although there are certainly more dangerous things dwelling in some corners of the Abyss, few can match the unbridled fury of Demogorgon enraged. If he can, Demogorgon always prefers to initiate combat while astrally projecting or while using *project image*; if he can use both (projecting an image of an astral projection), so much the better. The Prince of Demons is rarely encountered alone, but in the unusual circumstance that he is, one of his first actions (preferably before combat begins) is to summon a number of balors or goristros to aid him. When facing potent foes, he usually uses *gate* to call in even more powerful allies, such as Belcheresk or Saint Kargoth the Betrayer.

Once combat begins, Demogorgon moves quickly to enter melee with the most powerful foe, taking advantage of his reach as appropriate. He uses his dual action ability to move and make a full attack, following on succeeding rounds by continuing full attacks with spell-like abilities. He's particularly fond of casting *sticks to snakes* on wooden weapons wielded by his foes, *plane shifting* clerics and bards to the Negative Energy Plane, and using *dominate monster* and *charm monster* to recruit allies from his enemies. In addition, he's careful to hit foes with a

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quickened *greater dispel magic* as soon as possible, since he knows spells like *heroes' feast*, *mind blank*, and *death ward* are favorites that tend to hinder many of his attacks. He generally targets healers with his quickened *feeblemind*s. Demogorgon doesn't wait to cast *heal* on himself, doing so whenever needed to demoralize foes and recover from wounds—he'll usually cast it on himself once he's reduced to 500 hp or less. If he's forced to use all his *heal* spells and his foes continue to persevere against him, the Prince of Demons isn't above flight. His preferred method of escape is to use a *gate* to call in a powerful ally and then *teleport* away immediately after using his second action for that round.

Demogorgon's Goals

As the oldest of tanar'ri, Demogorgon has had eons to plot and scheme. While some of these goals he has long since realized (such as the conquest of the Blood Shallows, the destruction of the realm of N'gharl, and the creation of the retrievers), and others he has abandoned, such as the transformation of the Isle of Dread into a new Abyssal realm under his direct control (he's settled for controlling this region by proxy) and the subjugation of the Material Plane's kraken population (the kraken being too machevellian on their own, they made poor minions), the Prince of Demons retains an impressive list of goals that easily exceeds any other demon lord. The reason for this is simple: Demogorgon is, in many ways, two creatures that share one body, and each of these creatures has enough goals for one.

Perhaps the most famous of Demogorgon's goals is the destruction of his two greatest enemies—Orcus and Graz'zt. The three demon lords have been locked in battle since the dawn of the tanar'ri, and while both Orcus and Graz'zt spent some time dead or imprisoned, Demogorgon has never fully defeated either army, for when he moves against one, the other's forces are always there to strike at his flanks. If Orcus and Graz'zt could ever set aside their own hatred for each other, their combined forces could theoretically dethrone the Prince of Demons.

Beyond his hatred of these two, Demogorgon fights other wars as well. Fraz-Urb'luu has used his deceptive powers to lure Demogorgon into embarrassing and needless conflicts many times, enough that Demogorgon often sends his armies to Hollow's Heart to test the defenses. He once took and held half of Fraz-Urb'luu's realm and was poised to defeat the other when he was forced to return to Gaping Maw and defend it against an incursion from one of his other great enemies—Zuregurex, the tanar'ri demon lord of storms and the drowned dead. Zuregurex had long lusted for the waters of Gaping Maw and led an army of undead and

demonically-fused air elementals against Lemoriax while Demogorgon assaulted Hollow's Heart. Demogorgon returned just as Zuregurex began to dismantle the gates to his palace of Ungorth Reddik. So infuriated was Demogorgon at the double-insult of being torn from sure victory and having his home defaced that he slaughtered Zuregurex's army and pursued the Lord of the Drowned Dead all the way back to the 480th layer of the Abyss, Guttlevetch, a realm of endless shipwrecks, hurricanes, and blood-soaked beaches. Demogorgon destroyed the realm, sinking islands and turning the waters against Zuregurex, who in the end had to abandon his lair and flee to the Scalding Sea to finally escape. Guttlevetch remains in ruins to this day, although some whisper that Zuregurex has, in secret, returned to rebuild his realm. And then, of course, there is Obox-ob, an ancient obyrith lord and the first Prince of Demons. Demogorgon knows that Obox-ob still lives, festering in the depths of Zionin down below the very foundations of the Abyss. He has survived many assassination attempts from the Prince of Vermin, some quite close, and has for his own part never managed to progress far into this enemy's realm. If Demogorgon fears one foe, it is Obox-ob—for while Demogorgon inherited the role of Prince of Demons, Obox-ob was that role's inception.

Yet not all of the demon lords are Demogorgon's enemies. Most of them acknowledge his power, paying proper respects when required but taking greater pains to avoid placing themselves in situations where they could attract his attention. Few are the demon lords who actually count him as ally. The queen of fungi, Zuggtmoy, often visits the Screaming Jungle, spreading new strains of fungus while gathering more for her own gardens—she often visits Demogorgon on these journeys to discuss matters better left unsaid. Mighty Dagon, the obyrith lord of the deep who dwells in Shadowsea below Gaping Maw, often serves Demogorgon as an advisor, drawing upon eons of lore to aid Demogorgon's goals. In return, Demogorgon allows Dagon's minions to scavenge the Brine Flats for petitioners and other treasures. And one must not discount feral Ilsidahur, the demon lord of the simian bar-lguras, who guards the landward approach to Gaping Maw. Ilsidahur once aided Demogorgon in reopening the Shining Vortex of Mesnar, a portal that once connected the Abyssal woodlands of Morathkian with the Olympian Glades of Arborea, one of many portals used eons ago by the eladrin court to invade the Abyss and finish the job against the obyriths that the Wind Dukes of Aqaa started. Demogorgon and Ilsidahur managed to cause a fair amount of devastation there before their armies clashed with those of Gwynharwyf, an eladrin paragon. Although she pushed them back through the Shining Vortex of Mesnar, Gwynharwyf herself was forced to remain on the Abyssal side to ensure its permanent closing, and was soon thereafter captured by Demogorgon and Ilsidahur. Only the fact that the two demon lords wasted days arguing over how best to desecrate, torture, and ultimately slay Gwynharwyf granted Morwel the time she needed to mount a daring rescue of her missing consort. Ever since, Demogorgon's relations with Ilsidahur have grown strained, and lately the other demon lord has been wraking his mind on how to repair the damage before Demogorgon decides to invade the Guttering Grove and seize it for his own.

Finally, even a creature as feral and murderous as Demogorgon has lusts. His consorts through the ages have been as varied as all the Abyss has to offer, but recently his tastes have seemed to run to the human form. For many decades, his lover was the succubus Shami-Amourae, but when Demogorgon discovered Shami-Amourae had been manipulating his personalities for her own gain he had her imprisoned in the Wells of Darkness for eternity. He has since taken up with Malcanthet, the Queen of Succubi (who opened his eyes to Shami-Amourae's betrayals). These two unlikely demons have sired all manner of horrific offspring, most of which Malcanthet has been content to let loose in Gaping Maw, since their forms tend toward the nauseating. The most powerful of these monstrous scions is without a doubt a beast named Arendagrost, a monster that even Demogorgon finds unsettling to look upon. Malcanthet herself has used Demogorgon's split personalities for her own amusement, ironically abusing the Prince of Demons in the same way as his previous lover.

That Demogorgon's two heads have distinct personalities is a widely known fact, yet few realize the extent to which his two heads detest and loathe one another. Demogorgon's left head is Aameul, the more charismatic and calculating of the two. When Demogorgon needs to lay complex plans, interact with other powerful beings, or lead his armies and address his minions, it is Aameul who does the majority of the talking, while his other head glowers and sneers menacingly. This head, the right, is named Hethradiah. This personality is the more savage, feral, and impulsive of the two. Generally incapable of plotting anything beyond the immediate, it is the wrath of Hethradiah that most of Demogorgon's enemies feel when the Prince of Demons is roused to anger.

Aameul and Hethradiah's greatest enemies are each other. Both believe he would be much more powerful without the other's meddling, yet neither believes he can live without the other. Over the eons, both heads have tried countless plans to end the schism that rules them, yet to date, none of these plans have succeeded. The most recent attempt involved a theory of Aameul's in which he intended to use a demonic soul infused with raw soul-energy

from the Bastion of Unborn Souls to cauterize the mortal wound that would surely result from Hethradiah's murder, yet this plan collapsed on itself when mortals slew the half-fiend dragon Ashardalon and the only entrance to the bastion closed.

Ironically, it is Hethradiah, the impulsive and feral personality, who might have discovered the only real way to end Demogorgon's divided existence. Always before, the Prince of Demons had thought of his problem as something to be solved by destruction, yet after causing a wash of madness and feral ruin to destroy the empire of Thanaclan on the Isle of Dread and bathing in the resulting energies unleashed by this savage tide, a plan began to form in Hethradiah's scattered mind. It took nearly a thousand years for this plan to congeal, but now Hethradiah moves with purpose. Allowing Aameul to believe the idea was his own, Demogorgon has prepared a massive savage tide for the Material Plane. If successful, Demogorgon intends to use the savage tide to fuel a transformation in which his personalities will absorb each other, transforming him into something beyond a mere prince of demons. Demogorgon intends to become their king.

Demogorgon's Cult

Demogorgon's most numerous supporters on the Material Plane are, without a doubt, the ixitxachitl, a race of intelligent and highly evil rays that dwell in the deeper reaches of the seas. Ixitxachitls rarely come in contact with surface dwellers, and thus much of the air-breathing world remains content with the belief that the Prince of Demons has relatively few worshipers in the world.

The next most common worshipers of the Prince of Demons are the troglodytes. While most of these reptilian humanoids venerate their own deity, Laogzed, in ages past large numbers of heretics venerated Demogorgon as their true deity. The faithful of Laogzed waged many crusades before the dawn of modern civilzation to put down their demon-worshiping kin, and as a result, Demogorgon-worshiping tribes of troglodytes are quite rare and generally restricted to remote locations in deep jungles or distant isles. Now and then, adventurers stumble upon ancient temples of Demogorgon, thrust back up to the surface by earthquakes or otherwise returned to the world. These ancient temples are often guarded by slumbering priests placed in suspended animation and tribes of awakened simians who view the temples as their birthrights.

Yet it is not these cults of troglodytes and ixitxachitls that prove the most dangerous, for they dwell in remote corners of the world. Far more dangerous are the smaller cults of debased humanoids in the underbellies of large cities or in forgotten ruins found dangerously close to the civilized world. These cults are small, rarely numbering more than a few dozen and more often consisting of one to three worshipers of the Prince of Demons who have seized control of a larger tribe, using their magic and menace to lead them astray while keeping the truth of their worship a secret. Likewise, many evil sorcerers and wizards turn their lives to the study of Demogorgon, hoping to gain some measure of mastery over the Abyss and not always realizing that Demogorgon himself orchestrates their goals and actions. Most of his worshipers are the lowest of the low: pirates, murderers, and even cannibals. In the worst cases, these cults control their societies—evil theocracies that rule by terror and violence.

Sacrifices to Demogorgon vary wildly but always involve the slaughter of an innocent. Demogorgon vastly prefers the souls of his enemies—good-aligned clerics, paladins, and rangers who devote their lives to the destruction of all things demonic are widely known to be his favorites, and many of his cultists go to unusual length or great risk to capture such sacrifices. Wizards and sorcerers who seek his knowledge often make sacrifices to the Prince of Demons as well—while their motives are generally more self-centered and even secular, these sacrifices please the Prince of Demons just as well, if not more, for the ones performing the sacrifice might not realize the peril at which they place their own souls. The actual method of sacrifice varies but generally involves the conjuration of a demon to commit the actual killing blow. With a properly observed ritual, the soul of a person sacrificed in this manner is carried directly to Lemoriax, where it is steeped in the vile Fleshforges and transformed into a larvae, even if the soul itself was not destined for such a fate. This is one of the few instances in which an innocent soul can become a larvae—these tragic victims are said to be particularly valuable to fiends in the soul trade, and the fact that Demogorgon controls this method of their creation is one of several reasons he has remained in power for so long.

Rituals involving their own faithful are no less reprehensible. Worshipers of Demogorgon often partake of drug-fueled violent orgies or mass murders, all in the name of the Prince of Demons. One of the most disturbing of these rituals is the Feast of the Self, in which a prospective thrall of Demogorgon must offer himself to a conjured demon, allowing the demon to use his body for whatever nameless lusts that demon desires. This portion of the ritual damages the participant's body and mind, dealing 2d6 points of Constitution and Charisma damage. When over, the demon rewards the hopeful thrall by opening the participant's skull with a claw and scooping out a small portion of brain. The demon eats the brain matter and then regurgitates it into the aspirant's mouth for consumption. This results in another 1d4 points of Constitution damage and 2d6 points of Intelligence drain (which is typically restored at a later date via *restoration*). In this manner, by devouring one's own brain (symbolizing the split in Demogorgon's own mind), an initiate becomes a thrall of Demogorgon. Many do not survive this ritual, but those who

do have open to them a powerful prestige class indeed.

Clerics of Demogorgon have access to the domains of Chaos and Evil. If you use the *Fiendish Codex I* in your campaign, his clerics also have access to the Corruption and Demonic domains—otherwise, replace access to these domains with Destruction and Water. Demogorgon's symbol is a forked tail. His priests often make use of strange and primeval magic, favoring spells that have long since fallen out of favor with more modern spellcasters. One common spell in this category is known as *sticks to snakes* (see DRAGON #317).

Thrall of Demogorgon

The thrall of Demogorgon is a perversion of his race, a lunatic murderer at best, and unfortunately frequently something far worse. These are men and monsters who have accepted the demonic so wholly into their being that they can no longer be counted as members of their original races; they have given themselves, body, mind, and soul, to the very thing the Abyss holds most dear. They often serve as leaders or champions for cults of the Prince of Demons, yet the thrall of Demogorgon works just as well on his own, when he has no distractions to take his mind away from the depravities it feeds upon.

Multiclass characters are quite common as thralls of Demogorgon, if only because the Prince of Demons appreciates their versatility and the splitting of their skills along often disparate talents and traits. Combat-oriented characters, such as barbarians, fighters, and rangers, make particularly dangerous thralls of Demogorgon, as their staying power and focus on warfare meshes well with the powerful gifts granted those who take levels in this prestige class. Yet there is certainly a lure for spellcasters as well, particularly those who wish to augment failing bodies or other physical deficiencies.

This prestige class first appeared in the *Book of Vile Darkness* (pages 67–68). It is presented here, updated and slightly revised for use with the 3.5 ruleset.

Requirements

To qualify to become a thrall of Demogorgon, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 2 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 4 ranks, Knowledge (any other) 2 ranks.

Feats: Thrall to Demon (Demogorgon), Willing Deformity.

Special: Must be able to cast 1st-level spells or sneak attack +1d6.

Special: A thrall of Demogorgon must be initiated in a horrific rite known as the Feast of the Self (see "Demogorgon's Cult").

THRALL TO DEMON [VILE]

You supplicate yourself to a demon prince in return for a small measure of power.

Benefit: Once per day, while performing an evil act, you may call upon you demonic patron to add a +1 luck bonus on any one roll.

Special: Once you take this feat, you may not take it again; you may not be a thrall to more than one demon. Nor may you take the Disciple of Darkness feat (a similar feat that binds you to an archdevil). This feat first appeared in *Book of Vile Darkness*.

WILLING DEFORMITY

Through scarification, self-mutilation, and supplication to dark powers, you intentionally mar your own body.

Benefit: You gain a +2 deformity bonus on Intimdate checks.

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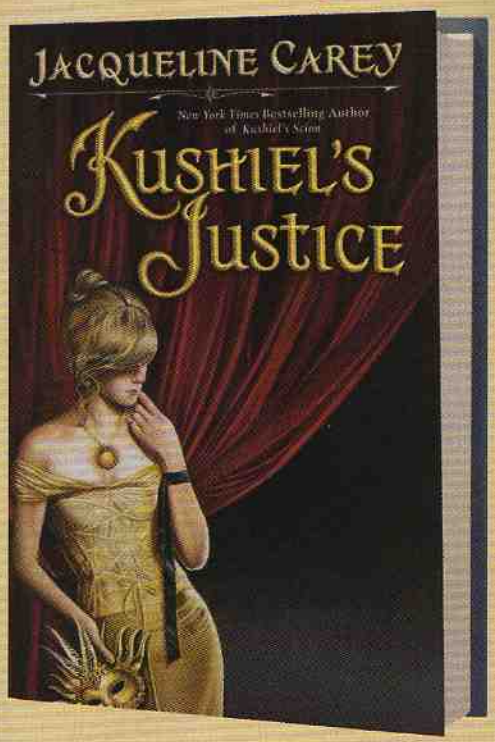

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THRALL OF DEMOGORGON

HIT DICE: D8

Class Level	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spellcasting or Feat
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Scaly flesh +1, hypnosis	Bonus feat or +1 level of existing class
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Touch of fear	—
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Reaching touch	—
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Dual actions, scaly flesh +2	Bonus feat or +1 level of existing class
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	*Summon minor demon*	—
6th	+6	+5	+2	+5	Rotting touch	—
7th	+7	+5	+2	+5	Scaly flesh +3	Bonus feat or +1 level of existing class
8th	+8	+6	+2	+6	Two personas, death touch	—
9th	+9	+6	+3	+6	*Summon major demon*	—
10th	+10	+7	+3	+7	*Demogorgon's will*, scaly flesh +4	Bonus feat or +1 level of existing class

Skills (4 + Int per level): Bluff, Climb, Concentration, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (any), Move Silently, Profession, Search, Sense Motive, Spot, Survival, Swim, Use Rope.

Class Features

The following are class features of the thrall of Demogorgon prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Thralls of Demogorgon are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with all types of armor, and with all shields (except the tower shield).

Spellcasting or Feat: When a thrall of Demogorgon attains 1st, 4th, 7th, and 10th level, his spellcasting level increases by +1 and he gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in whatever spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class, or else he gains a bonus feat of his choice. If the thrall chooses to increase his spellcasting level, he does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained, except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. The thrall may choose the bonus feat at one opportunity and the spellcasting level the next time the decision arises, or vice versa. The thrall must meet all of the prerequisites of the bonus feat before he takes it.

Scaly Flesh (Ex): A thrall of Demogorgon gains dark, scaly flesh that increases natural armor bonus by +1. This bonus increases by an additional +1 every three levels beyond 1st.

Hypnosis (Su): Once per day, a thrall of Demogorgon can produce an effect identical to that of the *hypnotism* spell, except it functions as a gaze attack with a range of 30 feet. The Will save to resist this effect is 10 + class level + Charisma modifier.

Touch of Fear (Su): Three times per day, a thrall of Demogorgon of 2nd level or higher can cause a creature he strikes with a touch attack to become frightened for 1d4 rounds. A successful Will save negates the fear, but the creature is shaken for 1 round. The Will save to resist this effect is 10 + class level + Charisma modifier.

Reaching Touch (Su): Three times per day, a 3rd-level thrall of Demogorgon can cause his arms to stretch unnaturally like tentacles, providing him an extra 5 feet of reach for 1 round.

Dual Actions (Su): Twice per day, a 4th-level thrall of Demogorgon can take two full rounds' worth of actions in the same round.

***Summon Minor Demon* (Sp):** A 5th-level thrall of Demogorgon can summon a demon of 5 HD or less once per day. This ability is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell. Once per day, a 9th-level thrall of Demogorgon can summon a demon of 10 HD or less. This ability is the equivalent of a 7th-level spell. This functions as a *summon monster* spell cast by a 15th level caster.

Rotting Touch (Su): Three times per day, a thrall of Demogorgon can deal 1d6 points of Constitution damage as a touch attack.

Two Personas (Ex): An 8th-level thrall of Demogorgon develops a multiple personality disorder that has the side effect of allowing the character to multiclass freely with no experience point penalties. In addition, whenever the character is subjected to a mind-affecting attack that allows a saving throw, he makes two saving throws. Both saving throws must fail in order for the mind-affecting effect to affect him.

Death Touch (Su): At 8th-level, a thrall of Demogoron can use an effect identical to that of *slay living* once per day. The Fortitude save DC to avoid death is 10 + class level + Charisma modifier.

***Demogorgon's Will* (Sp):** A 10th-level thrall of Demogorgon can call upon the Prince of Demons once per day to be granted a *limited wish*. The use of this ability requires 3 full rounds devoted to entreaties and prayers to Demogorgon before the *limited wish* is granted.

Demogorgon's Minions

Demogorgon's minions are the demons of the Abyss. While not all demons view him as their master, all demons, if begrudgingly, acknowledge him as their prince. In many cases, the chaotic nature of demonkind urges rebellion and hatred against Demogorgon, yet most of those who stray too close to his proximity find themselves his slaves. Many demons have embraced this lure and serve him as faithfully as any demon can. Of these, none can match the power wielded by the balor Belcheresk (CE male advanced balor fighter 4). Perhaps the demon best positioned to inherit Demogorgon's realm, Belcheresk serves also as the supreme commander of Demogorgon's prodigious army. This force of demons, monsters, half-fiends, planar mercenaries, and constructs is a vast force indeed—at any one time, only a fraction of Demogorgon's army can be found on Gaping Maw. Entire contingents a million strong are permanently stationed on other layers of the Abyss to provide protection for the Prince of Demons's many plots, while others fight endlessly on other Lower Planes to ensure Demogorgon's interests in the Blood War are represented.

Hezrous, wastriliths, skulvyns, barlguras, and balors are common in his realm on Gaping Maw, yet his true favorites are those creatures he has crafted himself. Demogorgon is a master of the art of shaping demonic life—most believe he stole these secrets from the sibriex obyriths, but Demogorgon claims his gift is a result of being the first tanar'ri.

Retrievers are likely his most infamous creations—immense spidery constructs the size of elephants and gifted with the ability to unerringly track down and "retrieve" those who have wronged the Prince of Demons. Lesser-known constructs built by the Prince of Demons are the stony lemorian golems, monstrosities imbued with many of Demogorgon's own traits and crafted in his image. Lemorian golems serve as guards and soldiers in the crooked avenues of Lemoriax. The streets of his capital city throng with specialized half-fiends known as lemorians, demonic soldiers created in Demogorgon's fleshforges.

Less well-known, but much more deadly, are the orlath demons. Cultivated from several of Demogorgons's teeth that broke off and lodged in the flesh of a powerful maralith the Prince of Demons slew, Orlath demons are often sent to the Material Plane to aid his cults as demonic diplomats and assassins.

The most feared and notorious of his creations are, without a doubt, the death knights. These undead soldiers are forged from the flesh and souls of only the most vile and reprehensible living champions—and none are more vile than those corrupted from once righteous and holy men and women. The first death knight, Saint Kargoth the Betrayer, still serves Demogorgon on Gaping Maw, but many others have been spwaned since him. While the secrets of creating death knights have long since been stolen by several of Demogorgon's enemies, none can match the Prince of Demons' skill at creating these deadly undead champions.

Perhaps one of the most obscure tales of such craftings, and yet likely the most powerful entity created by the Prince of Demons, is the Ravenous Maw, Azuvidexus. The tale of Azuvidexus's genesis is perhaps one of Demogorgon's greatest triumphs.

Eons ago, Azuvidexus was a demon lord of primeval beasts and scaled nightmares. This forgotten lord dwelt on a steaming, jungle-covered

layer of the Abyss known as N'gharl, and despite countless assaults on the realm, Demogorgon was unable to defeat Azuvidexus. So he took a new tactic, forging a truce with his enemy and aiding him in creating a particularly dire cult on the Material Plane—the cult of the Ravenous Maw. Once the cult was up and running, Demogorgon stepped back and watched, knowing what would come next.

For the region in which he helped Azuvidexus establish his cult was one under the protection of a particularly territorial pantheon of deities. When the Ravenous Maw infested the ancient city of Barliar and murdered the priests of the High Temple, this pantheon reacted swiftly. Its members descended upon the Abyss and tore free N'gharl, using their considerable power to condense the entire layer down to the size of a human head, trapping Azuvidexus within. Yet the deities of this forgotten pantheon did not expect the Abyss to react as it did. Even as they cast N'gharl into the Astral Plane, the void left behind by the layer's destruction lashed out—the Abyss itself reacted reflexively, like a hungry predator awakened from an eons-long torpor. It struck at these deities who dared destroy even such a fragmentary part of it, and in an instant annihilated the entire pantheon. All that remained were the pantheon's memories and dreams, and the Abyss seized even these. Today, the empty space that once held N'gharl is known as the Dreaming Gulf, and the dreams of those dead deities have been transformed into an entirely new race of demons known as the loumaras.

This incredible upheaval caught even Demogorgon by surprise—he had intended only for Azuvidexus to be murdered by the outraged pantheon, yet when he realized what had happened, the Prince of Demons retreated to his iron citadel on Pazunia and projected into the Astral Plane. After several years of searching, he recovered the N'gharl Seed. He took it with him back to Pazunia, created a *gate*, and cast the N'gharl Seed into a jungle in the Material Plane.

Once it arrived here, a curious thing happened. The seed bonded with the jungle surrounding its arrival point, transforming the area into a smaller version of its former glory. Likewise, the inhabitants of the jungle warped and became fiendish mockeries of their original forms. Eventually, a large tyrannosaurus, driven insane by an infestation of brain parasites, stumbled upon the N'gharl Seed, mistook it for food, and ate it. The seed instantly transformed the dinosaur, infusing it with the power and wrath of a dead demon lord and his Abyssal Realm. And as demonic brilliance and evil took root in the great dinosaur's spirit, Demogorgon arrived to offer support and advice. Today, Azuvidexus rules a region known as the Crawling Jungle, carrying out Demogorgon's wishes. By betraying an ally and sacrificing a pantheon, Demogorgon not only defeated an enemy, he rebuilt him as a slave. And as a side effect, the Abyss birthed an entire new race of demons.

Demogorgon's Realm

Demogorgon rules the 88th layer of the Abyss, a place known as Gaping Maw. This realm, like Demogorgon himself, is a land divided. An immense landmass sits at the edge of the realm, a primeval region covered with trackless tropical forests and vast bogs and fens. This is the Screaming Jungle, a place populated by fiendish lizardfolk, fiendish troglodytes, demons, and yuan-ti cultists. Near the interior, the land hardens and rises in ragged clefts to a hidden plateau ruled by barlguras and other demonic simians. Perhaps the most deadly menaces of the Screaming Jungle are the primeval verakias, demons that ruled here long before Demogorgon claimed the place as his own. Those who climb far enough up into these regions eventually emerge onto the Guttering Grove, the 90th layer of the Abyss.

Yet for all its size, the Screaming Jungle is but a speck when taken in context of the vast oceanic reaches that extend outward, eventually reaching the shoreless vast of the Abyssian Ocean itself. The ocean of Gaping Maw is interrupted here and there by ragged, twisted islands, in some cases little more than jagged rocks but in others consisting of volcanoes or twisted spires. Demogorgon's personal sanctuary protrudes from these waves: Abysm—two imposing serpentine towers that rise from the sea about a hundred miles from the Screaming Jungle's shores. These immense towers extend even further into the depths below, eventually reaching the 89th layer of the Abyss: Shadowsea, realm of Dagon, prince of the Darkened Depths.

Between Gaping Maw's two disparate realms lie the Brine Flats, a wash of tidal pools and shallow coves that extend for miles from the mainland's swampy shores. It is at the edge of the Brine Flats that the city of Lemoriax stands. This crumbling metropolis sprawls along the shuddering coastline, serving Gaping Maw as a capital and a place for demons and the truly debased to come and engage in trades that make saner realms shudder in their sleep.

Verakia

This monstrous creature has a draconic lower body, with a long spiked tail and reptilian feet, the front two of which include large gutting talons. Its upper torso is more humanoid, with large and powerful arms that end in two-fingered hands; the inner finger of each hand is larger than the other, and ends in a large, scythelike claw with a serrated inner curve. Its head has four eyes and an immense mouth with a long snakelike forked tongue. Two horns angle down like that of a bull. A third horn runs back from the rear of its head. Red smoke pours from the corners of its maw, and the inside of its throat glows with fire.

VERAKIA **CR 14**

Always CE Gargantuan outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, obyrith)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Listen +21, Spot +21

Aura form of madness (60-ft. radius, Will DC 21)

Languages Abyssal; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 31, touch 8, flat-footed 29 (–4 size, +2 Dex, +23 natural)

hp 200 (16 HD); fast healing 10; **DR** 15/lawful

Immune fire, mind-affecting effects, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 22

Fort +18, **Ref** +12, **Will** +12

Spd 50 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee bite +24 (2d8+12) and 2 claws +22 (2d6+6) and 2 talons +22 (2d8+6) and tail slam +22 (2d8+18)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Base Atk +16; **Grp** +40

Atk Options Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, overwhelming assault

Special Actions breath weapon, trample 2d6+18

Abilities Str 35, Dex 14, Con 27, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 17

SQ woodland stride

Feats Ability Focus (form of madness), Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Climb +31, Hide +9 (+29 in heavy vegetation), Jump +39, Listen +21, Move Silently +21, Spot +21

Environment any warm forest (Screaming Jungle)

Organization solitary, pair, or pack (3–8)

Treasure none

Advancement 17–22 HD (Gargantuan), 23+ HD (Colossal)

Form of Madness (Su) Any creature within 120 feet that observes a verakia must make a DC 21 Will save. Failure indicates that the creature becomes obsessed with the raw fury and murderous potential represented by the demon's teeth and claws. The victim must secure a slashing weapon at the first opportunity to the exclusion of all other actions. Once he has possession of a slashing weapon, he attacks the nearest living creature with it until his target is dead. If no targets are apparent, he focuses his energy on finding a new target. Most creatures afflicted with this psychopathic urge eschew all other actions (including eating), and left to their own devices soon die of thirst. Creatures that need not eat continue on their murderous rampage until cured or slain. As long as a creature suffers this insanity, he gains DR 10/slashing and is immune to fatigue, exhaustion, and other mind-affecting effects. This is a mind-affecting effect that does not affect chaotic evil outsiders. This madness can only be removed by *greater restoration*, *heal*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish*. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Overwhelming Assault (Ex) If a verakia makes a full-attack action against a single target and hits that target with at least three of its attacks, the unbridled fury of its whirling teeth and claws and tail overwhelm the target with its destructive power. At the end of the attack, if the victim still lives, he must make a DC 30 Will save or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. Any creature within 30 feet who witnesses an overwhelming assault must also make a DC 30 Will save to resist being stunned for 1 round. The save DC is Strength-based.

Breath Weapon (Su) 60-foot cone, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 8d6 fire and 8d6 unholy energy, Reflex DC 26 half. Any creature that fails to save against the blood-red flames of a verakia's breath weapon becomes horrifically scarred (physically and mentally, as the fire burns away emotions as well as flesh) and takes 1d6 points of Charisma damage as well. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Trample (Ex) Reflex half DC 30. The save DC is Strength-based.

Woodland Stride (Ex) A verakia may move through any sort of undergrowth (including magically manipulated undergrowth) at its normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment.

DEMOGORGON IN THE REAL WORLD

Demogorgon first appeared in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game in *Supplement III: Eldritch Wizardry* (where in addition to a full-page illustration, he possessed the immunity to petrification returned to him in this article). Yet like so many other demon lords in the game, his traditions reach back much further than the late 70s. Curiously, it appears there never was a "real" mythical creature called Demogorgon. The name itself, while having Greek roots (likely from the word "gorgon" [grim] and either "daemon" [spirit] or "demos" [people]) seems to have been invented whole cloth by an unknown Christian scholar back during the 4th or 5th century or thereabouts. Over the centuries, the name took on a life of its own and, despite the fact that it was a relatively new creation, soon became associated with primeval and ancient roots from well before the dawn of Christianity. Over the centuries, Demogorgon has been mention in numerous literary works, including Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, and even in Melville's *Moby Dick*. And more recently, Demogorgon was even the main villain of Brian Lumley's novel, *Demogorgon*, in which he takes on the role of the antichrist.

In DUNGEONS & DRAGONS itself, Demogorgon's appearance in the *Monster Manual* guaranteed his existence in the original campaign settings. Early on, he had an appearance in the *Official Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Coloring Album*. In GREYHAWK, he is sometimes known as "Ahmon-Ibor" or "the Sibilant Beast," and in the first edition *Fiend Folio* he was cited as the creator of the first death knights. In the Known World of MYSTARA, Demogorgon is in fact female, an immensely powerful inhabitant of the Sphere of Entropy. In DRAGONLANCE, death knights received a different creation myth, but Demogorgon still beat them into the setting's canon back in the second short story ever published for the setting in DRAGON #85. In this story, "A Stone's Throw Away," by Roger Moore, Tasselhoff Burrfoot foils an evil wizard's conjuration of the Prince of Demons and, upon catching Demogorgon's attention (however briefly), knows fear for the first time in his life. Demogorgon has appeared numerous times in the FORGOTTEN REALMS as well, but never more dramatically than in the computer game *Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn*, where his avatar has the role of being possibly the most difficult boss in the game. Through the editions, Demogorgon's gone from the guy with the most hit points to a lesser god, and although he spent a brief and accidental stint with hyena heads instead of baboon heads in the *Book of Vile Darkness*, he has remained one of the most popular and recognizable D&D villains of all time.

The ravenous and destructive verakia is to the Abyss what the mightiest of the tyrannosaurs are to the Material Plane: the environment's answer to savage perfection. The enormous verakia were the original lords of the Screaming Jungle, existing since long before the first wave of tanar'ri came to be, ruling a hidden realm unsuspected even by the majority of the obyrith lords of the time. When Demogorgon claimed Gaping Maw as his realm, it was in no small part due to the presence of these mighty demons—he saw in them echoes of his own primeval nature and primordial menace.

For their part, it remains unlikely the verakia have even noticed the change from obyrith to tanar'ri rule of the Abyss. Smart enough to enjoy the pain and fear of their prey, yet dumb enough to think of themselves as the mightiest demons in the jungle, the verakia are content to rule the depths of the Screaming Jungle as they always have, coming to the briny shores only when pursuing prey or out of some idle curiosity.

Verakias particularly enjoy battling foes in tangled jungle undergrowth, since the jungle itself seems to recoil in fear at their advance, allowing the mighty demons to move through tangled terrain with ease and maintain mobility in regions that bog down most other creatures. They generally reserve their breath weapon for attacks on foes they can't easily reach, or when faced with numerous foes—a verakia much prefers the thrill of making a full attack against a single target. Those who die from this overwhelming assault are, in many ways, the lucky ones—many of those who survive an encounter with a verakia are changed forever, transformed into murderous lunatics who unwittingly carry on the mighty obyrith's need for ruin wherever they go.

by Hal Maclean • illustrated by Jason Engle

Feathers & Fur

A Guide to Flying and Fanged Animal Companions

Long ago, in mankind's shadowy prehistory, when savages first tamed fire and let loose the stream of nonsense sounds that slowly, painfully, became language, they looked upon the other creatures in the world and yearned for their gifts. Raptors, soaring far above, left them longing for wings of their own. Wolves, rivals for the top of the food chain, lurked just beyond the reach of every campfire. Eventually, over the passage of countless generations, humanity managed to strike up partnerships with these ancient adversaries, allowing profit for both sides by pooling their unique abilities. Stretching back to ancient times, the craft of the falconer and huntsman blends art and science into a seamless whole, profoundly altering the destinies of all three species.

This article offers up a host of new game elements—including new skills, equipment, and feats—for those interested in running characters who share close bonds with hunting dogs and birds of prey. Four new monsters, hounds and hawks profoundly altered by their long association with particular monstrous races, are also presented here for characters seeking animal companions beyond their natural cousins.

Not-so-Stupid Pet Tricks

All living creatures enter the world endowed with patterns of behavior bestowed upon them by countless generations of ancestors. People who tame animals, including huntsmen and falconers, spend their days seeking ways to use training or conditioning to adapt these patterns of behavior to their own ends. Sometimes they redirect an instinct toward a different target, other times dampening a behavior so another might fill the breach. The best handlers find ways to make their feral charges perform seemingly impossible feats.

Anyone with ranks in Handle Animal can attempt to teach one or more of the following tricks to an animal. Like all tricks, each requires one week of work and a skill check exceeding the DC of the trick. Each counts toward the maximum number of tricks an animal can learn. Some of these tricks also require special equipment in order to reach their full usefulness or only apply to particular sorts of animals.

Bomb: *DC 20 Handle Animal check, must know deliver as well, raptors only.* The animal flies above the creature you point at and drops a held object upon it (see bird bombs below for some examples). This requires a successful ranged touch attack and, while the animal carries the object, it cannot make talon attacks.

Circle: *DC 25 Handle Animal check, must know seek as well, raptors only.* By making a successful DC 15 Handle Animal check, you can order the animal to "remember" a creature as a standard action. Whenever you order the animal to hunt for that creature it rises into the air and patrols the vicinity within a 1-mile radius. Every 10 minutes it can make a Spot check to locate the creature if it is in the area. If the animal finds the creature, it rises to a safe altitude and circles overhead, returning to your side after an hour or whenever you approach the creature. The animal can only remember one creature at any given time.

Deliver: *DC 20 Handle Animal check.* The animal approaches the creature you point at and drops an object within easy reach on the ground. You must give the animal the object it is to convey, and, if carrying this object interferes with the way it normally makes attacks (i.e. in a dog's mouth or a falcon's talons) it must drop it in order to attack.

Disarm: *DC 20 Handle Animal check, must know attack as well.* The animal attacks and attempts to disarm the creature you designate as its target so long as the target is no more than one size category larger than the animal. The target must actually hold a weapon or similar object in its hands and the animal must succeed at a disarm attempt. The special training of this trick gives the animal a +2 bonus on the disarm check, but it is still subject to an attack of

opportunity for making the attempt. If the animal also knows the fetch trick it can bring this object back to you.

Harass: *DC 15, must know attack as well.* The animal attacks one particular creature you designate, attempting to distract and annoy it rather than deal damage. This trick provokes an attack of opportunity. A successful attack by the animal deals no damage but requires the target to make a Concentration check (DC 10 + HD of the animal + your Cha modifier) or take a –4 penalty on attack rolls, saves, and skill checks for 1 round.

Herd: *DC 20, must know guard as well, canines only.* The animal patrols a perimeter you point out, with a maximum dimension on any particular side equal to its base land speed. It attempts to keep creatures within this area from leaving and new ones from entering. You may also command the animal to nudge creatures inside the perimeter to travel in a direction of your choosing. The animal always attempts to warn a creature first, barking, snarling, and nipping, and attacks to deal nonlethal only if attacked in turn.

Identify Scent: *DC 15, must know track as well, animal must possess the scent ability.* The animal can identify three different substances by their smell each time it learns this trick. It might know the scent of a plant species, a race of creatures, or anything else with a distinctive smell. Specific individuals do not possess a smell unique enough for the animal to learn. The animal also develops a distinctive way of identifying each smell it knows (such as a varying series of barks) allowing it to reveal which substance it detects.

Silence: *DC 10.* The animal does not bark or make any other involuntary sound unless you specifically command otherwise.

Tools of the Trade

Training animals for tasks, particularly those such as combat or hunting, require them to ignore their most primal instincts. Over the centuries, huntsman and falconers alike have built up a specialized body of lore and associated bags of tricks. These tools make an all but impossible task—turning a ferocious creature into a faithful and loyal companion—merely a matter of patience and effort. For additional equipment meant for animals, see the *Arms and Equipment Guide.*

Item	Cost	Weight
Bells	15 gp	1/4 lb.
Collar (spiked)	15 gp	4 lb.
Dog whistle	20 gp	1/10 lb.
Falcon's hood	2 gp	1/8 lb.
Falconer's glove	10 gp	3 lb.
Footfirm boots	40 gp	6 lb.
Lure	15 gp	4 lb.
Perch (saddle)	40 gp	8 lb.
Perch (shoulder)	30 gp	2 lb.
Perch (stand)	20 gp	15 lb.
Rawhide (10 strips)	5 sp	1/4 lb.
Talon tube	30 gp	1/4 lb.
Training arm	5 gp	15 lb.

Bells: These metallic spheres fix to the legs with leather straps called bewits. Their unique tone allows a falconer to find his bird should it go missing, get into trouble, or simply fly off. Any falcon equipped with bells has a –8 penalty on all Move Silently checks.

Collar (spiked): A series of sharp 2-inch spikes jut out of this sturdy collar fashioned from black leather. Any creature that successfully grapples or pins a dog wearing one of these collars takes 1 point of piercing damage. A creature can avoid these spikes by taking a –5 penalty on its grapple check.

Dog Whistle: This reedy metal whistle emits a sound that, while inaudible to most humanoids, can be clearly heard by canines. Those who employ this item gain a +2 bonus on Handle Animal checks involving canines. Anyone with a dog whistle can seek to drive away dogs within a 30-foot radius by making a DC 25 Handle Animal check. A successful check requires canines to make a Will save (DC 10 + 1 for each point the Handle Animal check exceeded 25) to avoid becoming panicked for 1d4 rounds.

Falcon's Hood: This thin, leather mask, designed to slip over the eyes and upper head of a falcon, simulates night, encourages rest, and calms a bird by limiting sensory stimuli. A hooded bird is unable to see and is more docile, generally making it unwilling to move or attack. A DC 15 Handle Animal check is required to fit a bird with a falcon's hood.

Falconer's Glove: A thick leather gauntlet designed to serve as both a resting place and launching platform for falcons. It protects the hand from a raptor's razor-sharp talons. It also imposes a –2 penalty on checks with skills demanding precise and careful manipulation of the fingers, including Climb, Disable Device, Forgery, Open Lock, Sleight of Hand, and Use Rope.

Footfirm Boots: Laces along the top of these hardened leather pads make it easy to secure them around the paws of any Medium or Small dog. The soles are lined with tiny barbs, granting a dog wearing them a +2 bonus on any Climb checks or Strength checks to resist a bull rush.

Lure: These vaguely bird-shaped bags of leather are attached to long cords, and are used to create the illusion of a prey animal. A falconer who whirls a lure over his head gains a +2 bonus on Handle Animal checks when training raptors new tricks.

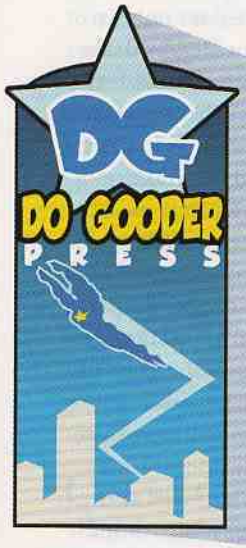
Perch (saddle): Customized to fit on a saddle, this metal semi-circle fitted with a wooden grip allows a falconer to transport his raptor by horse without the need to wear a glove at all times. A falconer must train a bird to make it familiar with landing and riding on such a perch. This takes one day and requires a successful DC 15 Handle Animal check. It does not, however, count as a trick when determining the maximum number of tricks a falcon can learn.

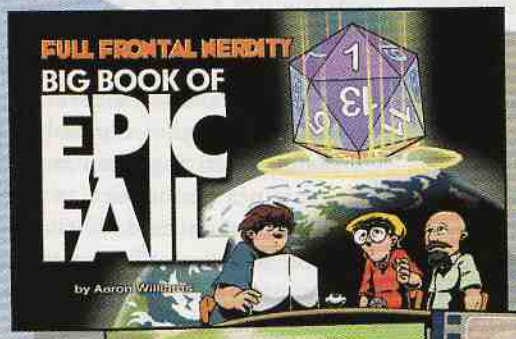
Perch (shoulder): This elongated pad enables a falconer to carry his raptor on his shoulder, eliminating the need to wear a glove or carry a cumbersome free-standing perch. Cushioned and lined with wood and metal, it protects against the falcon's talons while at the same time giving it a comfortable place to rest when not flying. A falconer must train a bird to make it comfortable landing and riding on such a perch. This takes one day and requires a successful DC 20 Handle Animal check. It does not, however, count as a trick when determining the maximum number of tricks a falcon can learn.

Perch (stand): The heaviest and most cumbersome kind of perch, this T-shaped, 5-foot-high stand rests upon a secure tripod base. All falcons learn to take off and land from these as part of their early training.

Rawhide (10 strips): Laced with spices, dogs find these strips of sun-dried meat particularly tasty. A character who uses rawhide as a reward when teaching a dog to perform a new trick gains a +2 bonus

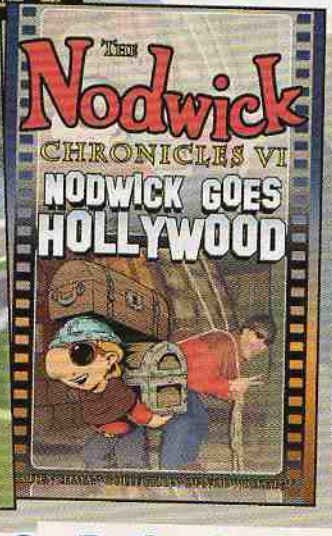
This summer, Do Gooder Press presents:





Four gamers. No lives. Roll for initiative! In their first 120-page collection, the guys from "Full Frontal Nerdity" bring you gaming gags, internet insanity, and comic collecting catastrophes in the "*Big Book of Epic Fail!*" This volume includes strips from the popular webcomic, as well as from Scrye and Comics Buyer's Guide!

Ps238 starts off its fourth year with yet another "learning experience" from the students at the first public school for superhero kids! Join Tyler (aka Moon Shadow), Emerald Gauntlet, The Flea, and all the other metahuman minors as they begin their legendary journeys. Save recess. Save the world, with "*Not Another Learning Experience!*"



It was bound to happen: Nodwick has gone Hollywood! Celebrating his appearance in the upcoming movie, "*Gamers 2: Dorkness Rising*" from Dead Gentlemen Productions, this fine collection completes the epic "Baphuma'al" storyline, and continues to deliver the laughs and legends that have made Nodwick a staple of fantasy humor! So plan a road trip to la-la land this summer as "*Nodwick Goes Hollywood!*"

www.dogooderpress.com

on his Handle Animal checks for the purposes of teaching it. Thereafter, however, he takes a –2 penalty on Handle Animal checks whenever he orders the dog to perform this trick without simultaneously offering rawhide as a reward.

Training Arm: This heavily padded glove covers the entire hand and arm up the shoulder with layers of leather and cloth. Designed to help trainers fend off biting dogs, it grants wearers an additional +1 AC bonus when using total defense. Wearing this item makes it impossible to use that particular arm for any other purpose, including wielding a weapon or carrying a shield, but it grants a +4 bonus on Handle Animal checks when teaching canines new tricks. In addition, the wearer takes a –6 penalty on checks with skills demanding precise and careful manipulation of the fingers, including Climb, Disable Device, Forgery, Open Lock, Slight of Hand, and Use Rope.

Talon Tube: A small container capable of holding a rolled-up scroll, potion, or other tiny object weighing less than a pound. A talon tube allows an avian to carry an item without impeding its flight or use of natural weapons. It requires a DC 12 Handle Animal check to affix a talon tube to a bird, or either load or retrieve an item from a worn tube.

Animal Alchemy

Many huntsmen and falconers have discovered the value of combining alchemy with their traditional practices. The alchemical items here expand the options available to such trainers, but many also require that animals learn a particular trick in order to use such items properly.

Item	Cost	Weight
Bird bomb (dust)	25 gp	1/2 lb.
Bird bomb (reek)	40 gp	1/2 lb.
Dog smoke	75 gp	2 lb.
Hound snuff (10 pinches)	90 gp	1 lb.
Mad foam	25 gp	1/4 lb.
Silent bells (set of six)	50 gp	1 lb.

Bird Bomb: Small, fragile orbs, these containers are crafted to be carried and dropped by flying birds. Two types of bird bombs are most commonly found:

Dust: Extracted from the pollen of certain flowers, this luminous maroon powder scatters easily and covers everything it contacts in a thin layer of cloying, glowing dust. Used as a grenadelike weapon by a bird flying overhead, when dropped the bomb shatters in a 5-foot-radius cloud of dust. Any creature in this area must make a DC 15 Reflex save or faintly glow for 1d4 minutes, during which time the creature does not benefit from the concealment normally provided by darkness, *blur*, displacement, or similar effects. A dust bird bomb requires a DC 20 Craft (alchemy) check to create.

Reek: A potent distillation of troglodyte musk and skunk oil, this viscous, amber liquid emits a nearly unbearable smell once exposed to the air, making it very useful for driving enemies away from cover. This glass container can be used as a grenadelike weapon by a bird flying overhead. When dropped, any creature vulnerable to nausea effects within a 10-foot radius of the point of impact must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or become nauseated for as long as it remains within this area, although it suffers no ill effects once it leaves. The smell persists for 1 minute, but is diffused if the area is exposed to strong winds. A reek bird bomb requires a DC 25 Craft (alchemy) check to create.

Dog Smoke: When its tab is pulled, a canister of dog smoke releases a sulphurous cloud of choking smoke. You can throw the canister as a grenadelike weapon (with a range increment of 20 feet). Rather than dealing damage to what it hits, the container releases a 10-foot-radius cloud of choking yellow gas, which lasts for 1 minute. Any creature vulnerable to nausea effects (except dogs, wolves, or other canines) must make a DC 15 Fortitude save every round it remains in the cloud or become nauseated. The nausea lasts for as long as the creature

remains within the cloud plus 1d4 rounds thereafter. A moderate wind (11+ mph), such as a *gust of wind* spell, disperses the smoke in 4 rounds. A strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the smoke in 1 round. Dog smoke requires a DC 25 Craft (alchemy) check to create.

Hound Snuff: A single pinch of this fine gray powder, if inhaled by a canine, causes it to sneeze uncontrollably for 1 round during which it is helpless unless it makes a DC 15 Fortitude save. Once the canine finishes sneezing, however, its sense of smell grows more acute for 1 hour, granting it a +4 bonus on any checks involving the use of its scent ability during this time. Hound snuff requires a DC 15 Craft (alchemy) check to create.

Mad Foam: If chewed and swallowed by a canine, these specially treated biscuits interfere with its salivary glands, causing it to produce great quantities of white foam for the next 2d6 minutes. This seeming ferocity grants the canine and any obvious master a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks for the duration of the biscuit's effects. Mad foam requires a DC 15 Craft (alchemy) check to create.

Nose Numb: This cloying yellow paste, if daubed directly on the nose of a creature with scent removes its ability to smell for 1d4 hours (DC 15 Fortitude save negates). While this makes it unable to employ its scent ability—or any abilities or bonuses that stem from it, such as tracking—it also renders the creature immune to all scent-based attacks, like a troglodyte's stench. A creature must be willing to have nose numb applied to it, otherwise, a user can attempt to smear it on an unwilling creature by making a melee touch attack that provokes attacks of opportunity. Nose numb requires a DC 15 Craft (alchemy) check to create.

Silent Bells: Bathed in exotic solutions, these tiny round bells chime on a frequency beyond that which most humanoids can hear, but which canines can hear perfectly well. If strung to a door, footpath, or similar location, they automatically alert any canine within 120 feet when someone trips them without alerting the trespasser. Silent bells require a DC 25 Craft (alchemy) check to create.

Creature Features

Many of the feats outlined here require a character to form a partnership with a specific animal (refered to hereafter a your "pet"), such as a raptor or a canine. Any animal companion or creature to whom you have successfully taught a trick using the Handle Animal skill allows you to gain the benefit of these feats.

Bonded

Acting as one mind in two bodies, you and your pet enjoy a nearly perfect symmetry in battle, making it very easy for you to keep your opponents off balance.

Prerequisite: Handle Animal 5 ranks, trained pet.

Benefit: Whenever you and your pet attack the same target in the same round you both gain a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls. In addition, when you attack your foe with a ranged weapon you do not take the normal –4 penalty for firing into melee if your pet is the only ally currently in combat with it. Penalties due to cover still apply.

Special: A fighter may select Bonded as one of his fighter bonus feats (see page 38 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Double Team

Your pet knows how to knock enemies off balance to give you yet another edge in battle.

Prerequisite: Handle Animal 8 ranks, Bonded, trained creature.

Benefit: Once per round, after your pet successfully strikes an opponent, you can make an attack of opportunity against the same opponent. This feat does not allow you to make more attacks of opportunity than you normally could in a single round.

Special: A fighter may select Double Team as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Protective Talons

Vigilantly circling overhead, your raptor may swoop down and snare ranged weapons just before they strike you.

Prerequisites: Handle Animal 8 ranks, Bonded, trained creature.

Effect: As a free action during your turn, if your raptor is within 5 feet you can order the creature to protect you from ranged attacks. If any opponent makes a successful ranged attack against you while your raptor is within 5 feet of you and under this command, your raptor can attempt to knock the missile off course. The raptor must make a melee attack against the missile, using the attack roll your opponent made against you as the missile's Armor Class. If the raptor succeeds, the missile misses you and is destroyed. If the raptor fails, you take damage as normal. Your raptor can only protect you from one missile per round.

Special: A fighter may select Protective Talons as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Screen

You order your pet to launch a ferocious attack against a foe, shielding you from that opponent's attacks.

Prerequisites: Handle Animal 8 ranks, Bonded, Dodge, trained pet.

Effect: Each round, as a free action, you can direct your pet to launch an especially determined but somewhat haphazard assault upon any one opponent. This causes your pet to take a –2 penalty on all attacks and Armor Class, but it grants you concealment against that foe.

Special: A fighter may select Screen as one of his fighter bonus feats.

New Creatures

More creatures stalk the wilds and soar the skies than the hounds and raptors of the natural world. Presented here are four new creatures, skilled companions of huntsmen and falconers both monstrous and mundane.

Caustic Creeper

With every single step this feral canine nearly disappears into the foliage as patches of dark, almost black, fur ripple to blend with the shadows of the forest. Only its eyes, the vivid green of colored glass, and the strange chemical smell that follows in its wake, offer consistent proof of its presence.

CAUSTIC CREEPER **CR 4**

LE Medium magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60, low-light vision, scent; Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages understands Draconic

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 45 (6 HD)

Immune acid, fear, sleep, paralysis

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee bite +8 (1d8+3)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +8

Atk Options Power Attack, bully

Special Atk acidic wounds

Abilities Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 10

SQ trackless

Feats Improved Natural Attack (bite), Power Attack, Track

Skills Hide +7, Move Silently +6, Survival +3

Advancement 7–12 HD (Medium); 13–18 HD (Large)

Bully (Ex) Vicious and brutal killers, caustic creepers take an especial delight when facing fearful opponents. They gain a +1 morale bonus on attack and damage rolls against shaken opponents. This bonus increases to +2 versus frightened opponents and +4 against panicked opponents.

Acidic Wounds (Ex) Whenever a caustic creeper is wounded with a slashing or piercing melee weapon it releases a spray of acid. A creature that makes such an attack with a melee or natural weapon must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save or take 1d6 points of acid damage. This save DC is Constitution-based.

Trackless (Su) A caustic creeper moves without leaving a trail, as per a druid's trackless step ability.

Skills Caustic creepers have a +8 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks made in forests and similar terrain. They also gain a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when using scent to track.

With their extraordinary life spans, dragons find it quite simple to think long-term and sometimes initiate breeding programs designed to produce useful servants. The green dragons' caustic creepers, the end result of repeated magical intervention over hundreds of dog generations, have proven their worth countless times. Bred to fight and die for their masters, they possess an instinctive loyalty and an ability to function amid many of the special attacks used by green dragons.

Sadistic and virtually sociopathic, caustic creepers possess an almost overwhelming drive to inflict emotional trauma upon others. This goes far beyond an attempt to gain some advantage over a particular opponent, and their deliberate, calculated, cruelty is legendary.

Rockhound

The thick gray and brown plates covering this small doglike creature, when combined with its stubby legs and squat, sturdy frame, almost makes it seem as if scuttles rather than walks. A pair of ears, drooping like hanged men, cast shadows over its dull, soulless eyes while making its powerful jaws even more prominent.

ROCKHOUND **CR 2**

LE Small magical beast

Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages understands Duergar

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (–1 Dex, +1 size, +6 natural)

hp 25 (3 HD);

Immune paralysis, phantasms, poison

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), burrow 5 ft. (1 square)

Rockhound Pups

A nonduergar who gains possession of a rockhound pup, no more than two months old, can attempt to transfer its instinctive allegiance to himself. This requires three weeks of training with a DC 20 Handle Animal check made each week. Failing any of these checks makes it impossible to form this bond. In addition, by feeding the pup a specially prepared diet of mystical ingredients (costing 1,000 gp for each of these three week) the owner gains the ability to share spells and spell-like abilities he casts upon himself with the pup.

Melee bite +6 (1d4+3)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +1
Atk Options Improved Sunder, adamantine jaws
Special Actions final frenzy

Abilities Str 14, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 10
Feats Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Track[B]
Skills Listen +2, Spot +2, Survival +2
Advancement 4–6 HD (Small); 7–9 HD (Medium)

Adamantine Jaws (Ex) Rockhounds have a natural ability to ignore hardness of less than 10 when sundering weapons or attacking objects and creatures.

Final Frenzy (Ex) Rockhounds always fight to their last breath. If an attack reduces a rockhound to negative hit points without killing it, the rockhound can, as a free action, make one last attack with a +4 bonus on its attack roll. Regardless of whether or not it succeeds with this attack the rockhound looses consciousness immediately afterward.

Skills Rockhounds have a +4 bonus on Survival checks when using scent to track.

Rockhounds are the end result of a duergar breeding program that grew more ambitious with each success. Originally intended to serve as useful additions to mining crews, the gray dwarves soon realized the canines' adamantine jaws—perfect for tunneling—also made them assets in battle, since they could chew weapons to bits. From there it was a natural step to engineer them to share in the magical abilities all duergar consider their birthright. Notoriously dour and suspicious, the duergar took no chances gambling upon the loyalty of rockhounds. These creatures have been bred to worship their masters as almost godlike figures. Rockhounds rarely outlive their masters and those few who do die soon thereafter.

SHADESTRIKER

This hideously emaciated hawk, its feathers as dark as coal has green eyes that dance with a hint of what can only be madness.

SHADESTRIKER **CR 2**
NE Tiny magical beast
Init +9; **Senses** blood trace, darkvision 90 ft., scent; Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages understands Drow

AC 18, touch 17, flat-footed 13
(+2 size, +5 Dex, +1 natural)
hp 15 (2 HD)
SR 14
Fort +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +1

Spd 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 80 ft. (average)
Melee talons +2 (1d2–2)
Ranged needlespike +7 (1d4)
Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Base Atk +2; **Grp** –8
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6
Special Actions needlespike

Abilities Str 6, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 12
SQ blood trace
Feats Improved Initiative, Track
Skills Hide +5, Move Silently +5, Survival +6
Advancement 3–6 HD (Small)

Needlespike (Ex) Like many birds, shadestrikers swallow small pebbles and stones as an aid to their digestion. Unlike most birds, however, they use stomach contractions and powerful digestive juices to gradually turn these stones into razor sharp missiles. Three times per day, a shadestalker can spit a cluster of these needlespikes as ranged attacks (range increment 20 feet).

Sneak Attack (Ex) Whenever a shadestriker's opponent is denied his Dexterity bonus to AC, or if the shadestriker flanks its opponent, it deals an extra 1d6 points of damage. This ability is just like a rogue's sneak attack and subject to the same limitations.

Blood Trace (Ex) A shadestriker gains a +10 bonus on Survival checks made to tracking creatures wounded or otherwise covered in blood.

Skills Shadestrikers gain a +5 bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks made in subterranean environments.

The drow, surrounded by the grandeur of their dark queen, must take great pains to never do anything which she might construe as a slight to arachnids. Fearful that using hounds as hunting partners instead of spiders might give offense, they long ago discovered the advantages of falconry. With their powerful magic and a patience only the long-lived truly understand, they devoted countless generations of rare Underdark-dwelling raptors to producing a perfect subterranean hawk, the shadestriker. Swift and relentless, able to follow even the faintest trail of blood, and equipped with needlelike spikes, the shadestrikers serve the dark elves as miniature assassins.

SHIMMERWING

The very air seems to twist in a rippling distortion similar to a fun-house mirror, casting a disorienting panorama of reflections. Changing direction, a bird bedecked with wildly reflective feathers takes shape.

SHIMMERWING **CR 3**

LE Tiny magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages understands Beholder, understands Common

AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; natural concealment (+2 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 19 (3 HD)

Immune reflect rays

Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

Spd 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee talons +8 melee (1d2–3 and blinding touch)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +3; **Grp** –8

Atk Options blinding touch

Abilities Str 4, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11

SQ reflect rays, natural concealment

Feats Flyby Attack, Weapon Finesse (talons)

Skills Hide +3, Listen + 6, Spot +6

Advancement 4–9 HD (Small)

Reflect Rays (Su) A shimmerwing is not only immune to ray attacks but can, as a free action, contort its body to send a ray that would have hit it lancing at another target. The opponent rolls to see if his ray would have hit the shimmerwing as normal. If it would, the shimmerwing may make a ranged touch attack against another target, with success meaning it has reflected the ray and struck the target. A target struck by a reflected ray is affected by the ray just as though it were the orignal target.

Blinding Touch (Su) Any living creature struck by a shimmerwing must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1d4 rounds. The save DC for this attack is Constitution-based.

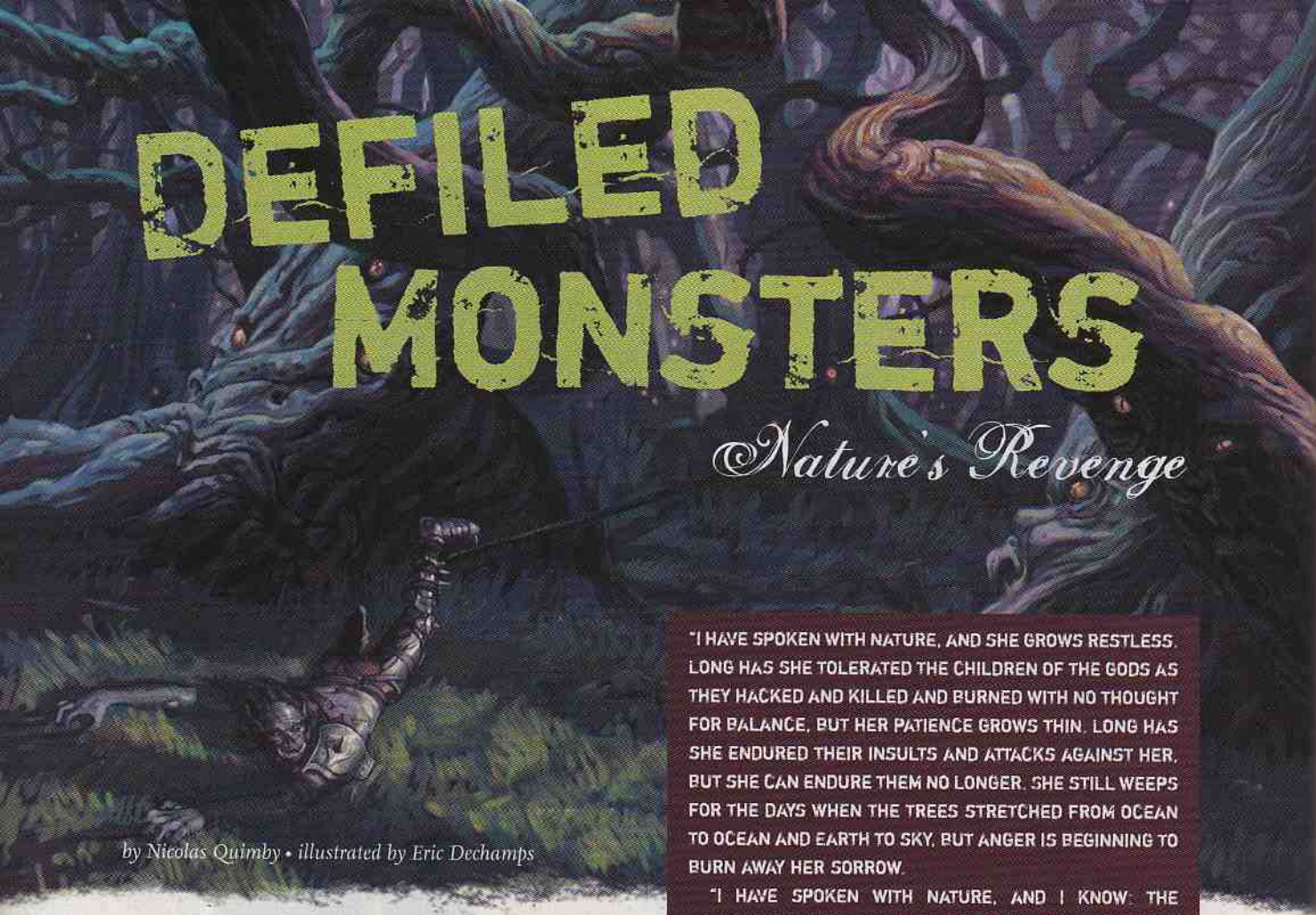
Natural Concealment (Ex) The mirrorlike feathers of a shimmerwing bend and warp light, making it very difficult to locate in combat and granting it concealment (20% miss chance) against all attacks.

Skills Shimmerwings gain a +5 bonus on Hide checks when they remain completely still.

Shimmerwings, sometimes called "flying mirrors," were created to reflect eye rays in unexpected directions, giving their beholder masters another edge in battle. Their other abilities came as a welcome bonus, and they remain one of the most useful servant races ever to emerge from the secret lairs of the eye tyrants.

DEFILED MONSTERS

Nature's Revenge



by Nicolas Quimby • illustrated by Eric Dechamps

"I HAVE SPOKEN WITH NATURE, AND SHE GROWS RESTLESS. LONG HAS SHE TOLERATED THE CHILDREN OF THE GODS AS THEY HACKED AND KILLED AND BURNED WITH NO THOUGHT FOR BALANCE, BUT HER PATIENCE GROWS THIN. LONG HAS SHE ENDURED THEIR INSULTS AND ATTACKS AGAINST HER, BUT SHE CAN ENDURE THEM NO LONGER. SHE STILL WEEPS FOR THE DAYS WHEN THE TREES STRETCHED FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN AND EARTH TO SKY, BUT ANGER IS BEGINNING TO BURN AWAY HER SORROW.

"I HAVE SPOKEN WITH NATURE, AND I KNOW: THE ARROGANCE OF THE MEN WHO ASSAULT HER IS MADNESS. THE DRUIDS HAVE FAILED AGAIN AND AGAIN TO PROTECT HER, BUT IN TRUTH SHE NEEDS NO PROTECTION. NATURE IS NOT SOME HELPLESS MAIDEN TO BE RAPED AND PLUNDERED BY ANY FOOL WITH AN AXE OR A TORCH. SHE IS A BEING ABOVE ANY MAN, A FORCE ABOVE THE DEITIES, AND ONE WAY OR ANOTHER THOSE WHO DARE TO PILLAGE HER HOME AND DEFILE HER CHILDREN WILL FEEL HER WRATH.

"I HAVE SPOKEN WITH NATURE, AND SHE IS GROWING ANGRY. MARK MY WORDS: IF MAN CONTINUES ALONG HIS CURRENT PATH, HE WILL NOT LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO DESTROY HIMSELF.

—LATHOS KREEL, SAGE OF NATURE

BEASTWRAITH

This creature looks like an albino animal whose form seems to shift and flow. There seems to be a strange intelligence in its completely colorless eyes, but that might just be a trick of the light.

BEASTWRAITH **CR 3**

Always NE Small undead (incorporeal)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +4

Aura savage nature (30 ft., DC 13)

Languages none (understands Sylvan)

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12
(+1 size, +2 Dex, +1 deflection)

Miss Chance 50% (incorporeal)

hp 35 (5 HD)

Immune undead immunities

Fort +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6

Speed Fly 40 ft. (perfect) (8 squares)

Melee incorporeal touch +4 (1d8 cold plus 1 Str)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** —

Special Actions terrifying howl

Spell-like Abilities (CL 5th)
At will—*death knell* (DC 13)

Abilities Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 13

SQ incorporeal traits, create spawn, undead traits

Feats Improved Initiative, Toughness

Skills Hide +8, Listen +4, Spot +4, Survival +4

Advancement 6–9 HD (Small); 10–15 HD (Medium)

Savage Nature (Su) Animals and magical beasts are unnerved by the presence of a beastwraith. Any such creature within 30 feet of a beastwraith must make a DC 13 Will save or become driven by a bloodlust to attack the nearest creature for 1d4 rounds. This bloodlust can cause familiars and animal companions to attack their masters. Whether or not the save is successful, a creature cannot be affected again by the same beastwraith's savage nature aura for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Terrifying Howl (Su) A beastwraith can, as a standard action, unleash a terrifying howl. Any living creature within 60 feet who hears this howl becomes shaken for 1d4 minutes. A DC

13 Will save negates this condition. Those creatures who are already shaken become frightened for 1d4 rounds instead. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Create Spawn (Su) Any animal or magical beast slain by a beastwraith's *death knell* ability immediately rises as a beastwraith. This new undead is not under the control of its creator.

Beastwraiths are malevolent spirits that form when a large number of animals are killed and left to rot, such as through years of sport hunting, great forest fires, or magical cataclysms. Each beastwraith is a composite being formed from the spectral remains of many such animals, although its form is incorporeal its shape seems to change between those animals that created it, such as vipers, wolves, and hawks. They long for retribution against the creatures responsible for their deaths (almost always humanoids).

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Beastwraiths have ever-shifting forms, often appearing as native, albeit albino, versions of local animals. When they get close enough, they often howl before closing in to attack with their incorporeal touch. If numerous foes were shaken by their first howl, they often howl a second time to attempt to frighten them. Beastwraiths always attempt to howl before approaching within 30 feet of an animal or magical beast so their savage nature aura has a greater chance of success.

When beastwraiths fight in groups for more powerful champions of nature they act as front-line fighters, using their combined howls to scatter enemies to hunt them down and slay them individually.

SAMPLE ENCOUNTERS

Beastwraiths usually attack alone, although they often either serve or tag along behind other creatures with reputations for humanoid-slaying—particularly those allied with nature. They are also known to gather in swarms of their own kind in regions devastated enough to produce such numbers, ranging from small groups to massive packs.

Hounds of the Blasted Land (EL 8): In a vast scorched field that was once a vibrant forest, where the ashes are just beginning to blow away and green things to grow again, a small pack of six beastwraiths roam, looking for the sorcerer who caused the conflagration. The nightly hunts take them through nearby villages, causing a great deal of terror and panic. The sorcerer, however, is hiding in his mountain demesne not far away, paranoid of the spectral monsters who plague his dreams.

ECOLOGY

Beastwraiths do not need to eat, and when they themselves are killed they simply dissipate. They are completely removed from the natural order they were once a part of. Although they have never been known to attack wild animals, such creatures still respond to a beastwraith as they would a dangerous predator, no matter how harmless a form it takes.

Beastwraiths have no society to speak of and don't seem to interact in any way (beyond utilizing basic group tactics in combat) even when found in large numbers.

Environment: Beastwraiths either haunt wild places and attack any woodsmen or explorers who dare

wander there or drift into more settled regions where they cause great havoc, turning flocks against their shepherds and pets against their masters. They might be found in any region where healthy populations of living animals dwell, as well as attacking nearby hamlets and villages, but they are especially common in regions rendered barren or empty by extensive over-hunting or great unnatural disasters.

Typical Physical Characteristics: A beastwraith's form is constantly shifting between those of various animals, from dogs to badgers to owls (all of which are Small, despite the creature's normal size). These forms are all white in color, including their colorless eyes. Canny observers might also notice a feral, unearthly cunning in the set of its face, and its cry often sounds like that of several animals at once.

Alignment: A beastwraith's simple sentience knows only malice and the desire for retribution. Beastwraiths are always neutral evil.

TYPICAL TREASURE

Being incorporeal in their natural state, beastwraiths don't carry treasure. Creatures killed by them might, but the beastwraith might not be encountered anywhere near such "treasures."

BEASTWRAITH LORE

Characters can learn more about beastwraiths using Knowledge (religion). When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including information from lower DCs. Characters can use Knowledge (nature) to learn about the creature's origins in a similar fashion.

Knowledge (religion)

DC	Result
13	This creature is a beastwraith, an incorporeal undead creature that manifests as a pale-looking animal. Beastwraiths hate humanoids. This result reveals all undead and incorporeal traits.
18	As unnatural creatures, the presence of beastwraiths can cause other animals to enter a frenzied state, attacking any nearby creatures, including friends and masters.
23	A beastwraith's howl can unnerve even the stoutest warriors, causing them to flee if they lack resolve.

Knowledge (nature)

DC	Result
13	This creature is a beastwraith. Beastwraiths are undead creatures, the spectral remains of animals. They hunt down creatures of the same general type as the ones that killed them.
18	Beastwraiths are formed when large numbers of animals are killed in unnatural ways and left to rot.

BLOODLANCE

This horselike creature appears demon-possessed: eyes glowing a hellish red, muscles unnaturally swollen with such power that they threaten to tear its skin, hooves ripping up the ground as it rampages. A twisted, crimson lance of cartilage and scar tissue grows from the stump of its horn, a grizzly parody of the pearly lance carried by a normal unicorn. Thin lines of blood run down its face and into its mane. The creature seems to be emitting one constant scream of insanity, interrupted by the occasional gasping breath.

BLOODLANCE **CR 5**

Always CN Large magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +6, Spot +16

Aura magic circle against good

Languages None (never communicates)

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 15
(–1 size, +3 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 50 (4 HD)

Immune electricity, poison, charm, compulsion

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10

Fort +11, **Ref** +7, **Will** +1

Speed 60 ft. (12 squares)

Melee horn +11 melee (1d8+8 plus wounding and disease) and 2 hooves +5 melee (1d4+3)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +15

Special Actions *summon demons*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
3/day—*inflict light wounds* (DC 16)

Abilities Str 24, Dex 17, Con 25, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 24

SQ fiendish presence

Feats Alertness, Skill Focus (Survival)

Skills: Jump +23, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +6, Survival +3

Advancement 5–8 HD (Large)

Magic Circle Against Good (Su) This ability continuously duplicates the effect of the spell. A bloodlance cannot suppress this ability.

Wounding Horn (Su) A bloodlance's false horn functions as a *+1 wounding weapon*. Each hit deals 1 point of Constitution damage from blood loss in addition to the listed damage. Creatures immune to critical hits (such as plants and constructs) are immune to the Constitution damage dealt by a bloodlance's horn. If removed from the bloodlance, this horn crumbles, only to regenerate (assuming the bloodlance still lives) over the next hour.

Disease (Su) Demon fever—horn, Fortitude DC 19, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d6 Con. Each day after the first, on a failed save, an afflicted creature must immediately succeed on another DC 19 Fortitude save or take 1 point of Constitution drain. The save DC is Constitution-based.

***Summon Demons* (Sp)** With a soul-splitting shriek (free action), a bloodlance can automatically summon one dretch, imp, or other chaotic evil outsider with a CR of 2 or less.

The bloodlance can use this ability once per hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd-level spell.

Fiendish Presence (Ex) A bloodlance is forever plagued by disembodied chaotic evil outsiders. They cannot control it directly (bloodlances are immune to such effects), but they can and gleefully do influence it and use it as a vessel for destruction on the Material Plane.

Protection from evil and *protection from chaos* hedges out these forces. For the duration of the spell, the bloodlance loses its subtypes as well as its *magic circle against good* and *summon demons* abilities. A bloodlance so affected acts naturally: it does not regain its sanity or attempt to communicate, but it does try to flee the fight and only attacks to defend itself. *Dispel evil* or *dispel chaos* affects a bloodlance in this way for 24 hours, and a bloodlance who enters a *magic circle against evil* or *magic circle against chaos* is affected for as long as it stays within the spell's area. Bloodlances attempt Will saving throws against these spells, where allowed.

Because of their unique magical properties, unicorn horns are a coveted commodity among evil alchemists and spellcasters, most of whom are not above hunting down a living unicorn to get one. While most at least have the decency to kill the noble creature before taking its horn, the most twisted among them are sadistic enough to simply saw off the horn of a living unicorn, leaving the creature in unending, unspeakable pain. The evilest rituals even require the unicorn remain among the living (see the *violated horn*, *Book of Vile Darkness*, 41). While many of these poor creatures spend the rest of their short lives in crippling misery, some are fated to worse: they first go mad, then fall under demonic influence, becoming hellish perversions of their kind.

Bloodlances are creatures similar to the unicorns they once were, although they benefit from greatly enhanced physical abilities and a number of traits usually associated with tanar'ri demons. A bloodlance's entire existence is an insane, mindless rage, and it is capable of nothing but destruction.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

A bloodlance that comes under attack or spots an armed party charges headlong, unleashing all of its abilities in quick succession. It employs few tactics but usually positions itself so it can strike weak targets with its less accurate hoof attacks while lashing out at tougher foes with its horn.

SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

Bloodlances rampage constantly, attempting to kill anyone and destroy anything they see. They are usually alone, for they have no use for servants and no force can tame or command them—not even with magic. Bloodlances ignore the presence of evil outsiders, however, and so demons and other fiends might gather behind them for short periods to join in the joy of slaughter.

Hellish Herd (EL 8): Two nightmares gallop through the air behind a bloodlance, helping it to overcome anything it its path simply to keep themselves amused and for the sake of doing evil. The two kinds of creatures have little patience for one another, however, and in the absence of bloodshed to entertain them, the nightmares leave the bloodlance to its fate. During combat, the nightmares usually stay in the air (within range of the bloodlance's magic circle against good), letting the bloodlance do most of the fighting as well as leaving it to bear the brunt of any counter-attack. As soon as any member of this group is killed or incapacitated the remaining nightmares flee.

ECOLOGY

A bloodlance doesn't contribute to an ecology so much as it damages it: it kills, breaks, and spreads disease without reason in its rampage. No natural scavenger touches a bloodlance's remains should it fall. It usually wanders too far and too quickly to deal serious damage to any one glade or forest, tirelessly cutting an endless swath of destruction. Bloodlances do not need to sleep and rarely take time to eat, most often feasting on still-warm meat.

Environment: While unicorns are usually found in forests, the demons speaking in a bloodlance's head tend to guide it with some intelligence toward places where it can do the most harm. Bloodlances might be found in any wild or civilized place, but they most often attack settlements near woodlands where they can make a hasty retreat if necessary.

Typical Physical Characteristics: A bloodlance resembles a unicorn, with the obvious exceptions of muscles swollen with abyssal strength and a ghoulish "horn" made of gore and cartilage. A typical bloodlance is 8 feet in length and 5 feet high at the shoulder, but weighs up to 1,600 pounds. The fur of elder bloodlances is more red than white, coated in several layers of bloodstains.

Alignment: Bloodlances are always chaotic neutral. Although it is completely insane and tormented by fiendish whispers, a bloodlance is by most definitions not evil. Many good folk would rather see a bloodlance captured and cured than killed, but the creature's great strength, destructive nature, and immunity to most enchantments make capturing one a risky prospect.

TYPICAL TREASURE

Bloodlances do not carry treasure, and their wanderings are too random and far-flung for the treasures of those they slay to commonly be found anywhere near them. They sometime bear magic items typically worn by unicorns, such as *horseshoes of speed.*

BLOODLANCE LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (arcana) can learn more about bloodlances. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including information for lower DCs. A Knowledge (nature) or Knowledge (the planes) check can also be used to learn more about the bloodlance's nature and the means of curing it.

Knowledge (arcana)

DC	Result
15	This creature is a bloodlance, a vile creature created from a normal unicorn. This result reveals all magical beast traits.
20	A bloodlance can summon minor demons, and its pseudo-horn causes severe bleeding and disease.
25	A bloodlance is surrounded by a constant *protection against good* effect. It is resistant to most energies, and like unicorns proves immune to charm and compulsion spells.
30	Spells which dispel or ward against chaos or evil, when used on a bloodlance, negate some of its abilities and render it much less violent for a short time.

Exorcising a Bloodlance

A bloodlance can be cured in a special ritual that takes 24 hours. This ritual requires 1,000 gp worth of special materials and five people with at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (nature) and Knowledge (religion). The bloodlance must be restrained, and must either be subjected to a *dispel evil* at the beginning of the ritual or kept under the influence of *protection from evil* or *magic circle against evil* for the entire duration of the ceremony. Druid circles attempting to exorcise a bloodlance usually enlist the help of a good church or celestial being to provide these spells. The ritual cannot be completed unless the unicorn's horn has been recovered. If the horn is intact, it can be reattached as part of the ritual, but if it isn't then the remains of the horn and a *regenerate* spell are required. If the ritual is completed successfully, the demons are driven away, the horn is restored, and the bloodlance becomes a unicorn once more.

Demons do not like to see a bloodlance exorcised, for it robs them of a potent engine of chaos in the mortal world. Druid circles that plan on attempting this ritual usually employ adventurers to defend them.

Knowledge (nature or the planes)

DC	Result
15	This creature is a bloodlance, a unicorn that went insane when its horn was cut off. Bloodlances aren't evil in alignment but are haunted by a demonic presence that drives them to violence.
20	If the bloodlance can be captured, it can be cured. The process of curing a bloodlance requires its original horn.
25	Spells which dispel or ward against chaos or evil, when used on a bloodlance, negate some of its abilities and render it much less violent for a short time.
30	This result reveals the exact nature of the ritual needed to cure a bloodlance, including all of the information given in the Exorcising a Bloodlance sidebar.

DEADWOOD REVENANT

A ghostly female figure hangs in the air before you, wavering like a branch blown by an invisible wind. She resembles a dryad, features fine and elflike and skin like treated wood, but her translucent form is lit from within with an eerie green glow. Cold white light shines from her eyes and her hands burn with opaque black fire. She appears as leafless and bald as a dead tree. There is a condescending, pitiless expression frozen onto her delicate face, and her voice echoes with the authority of a being that embodies a force much greater and more terrible than itself.

DEADWOOD REVENANT **CR 6**

Always NE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +11

Aura curse upon mankind (120 ft.)

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan

AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +4 deflection)

Miss Chance 50% (incorporeal)

hp 39 (6 HD)

Immune undead immunities

Fort +2, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Ranged 2 darkfire rays +7 (1d10)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** —

Special Actions true curse

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th):

At will—*bestow curse* (DC 20), *entangle* (DC 13), *speak with plants*

3/day—*charm person* (DC 13), *deep slumber* (DC 15), *tree stride*, *charm animal* (DC 13), *inflict light wounds* (DC 13)

1/day—*suggestion* (DC 15)

Abilities Str —, Dex 19, Con —, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 18

SQ undead traits, incorporeal traits

Feats Ability Focus (*bestow curse*), Dodge, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Hide +13, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (nature) +11, Listen +11, Spot +11, Survival +11

Advancement by character class; **Favored Class** druid

Curse Upon Mankind (Su) The presence of a deadwood revenant has an ill effect on the fate of humanoids, for her very existence is an act of sacred retribution against them. Any humanoid within 120 feet of a deadwood revenant suffers a –2 penalty on all attacks, saving throws, and skill and ability checks.

If the existence of a deadwood revenant is caused by nonhumanoids, then her ability might affect creatures of a different type, although this is rare.

Darkfire Ray (Su) A deadwood revenant fights by hurling raw death energy at her foes. This is similar to a negative energy attack but damages undead just as it does living creatures. It functions as a ray (ranged touch attack) with a range of 50 feet and overcomes damage reduction of any type.

True Curse (Su) Four times per day, as a full round action, a deadwood revenant may bestow an even more powerful curse on a creature she has already cursed with her *bestow curse* ability. The target, no matter how far away, must then succeed at a DC 20 Will save. Failure indicates that no spell short of a *wish* or *miracle* can lift the curse for as long as the deadwood revenant exists.

Because of the bond forged between the victim's fate and the deadwood revenant's existence, anyone affected in this way who is aware of the cause of his curse may attempt a DC 22 Wisdom check once per round as a standard action to learn the exact distance and direction to the deadwood revenant's current location.

Deadwood revenants are ghostlike beings who arise when a dryad's sacred oak is among the trees felled in a massive act of deforestation. Nature itself is the source of the dark energies that give the restless soul of the dryad unlife: its very existence is an act of retribution against mankind. Deadwood revenants exist to make humanoids pay for their crimes against nature.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Although a deadwood revenant can rain death opon her foes, her greatest power is her mastery of curses. Deadwood revenants are capable of weaving curses that can't be lifted by normal divine magic, and it isn't uncommon for entire communities of hunters or loggers to languish in ill fortune and misery under the deadwood revenant's vengeful shadow. The only way to lift such a curse is to destroy the deadwood revenant, but few victims even know she is the cause for their misfortune. Thus, the majority of a deadwood revenant's encounters end nonviolently but unfavorably for her foes.

When forced into battle, deadwood revenants seldom fight alone. They prefer to disrupt foes with their spell-like abilities and curses while allied forest creatures, charmed animals, or charmed humanoids do their fighting for them. When unexpectedly attacked by someone she deems a threat, a deadwood revenant usually causes as much havoc as possible with curses and *charm* spells before retreating via *tree stride* and gathering whatever reinforcements she can find.

When a deadwood revenant attacks directly, it is usually in a focused effort to bring down a character capable of damaging her, such as a wizard employing force effects. A deadwood revenant who starts taking serious

damage usually moves inside a large tree, where she can either heal herself while benefiting from cover or use *tree stride* to reposition or retreat.

SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

A deadwood revenant ready for a fight is encountered with the aid of charmed animals and humanoids at least, and often also has the assistance of other forest-dwellers with an interest in driving civilization away from the wood's edge.

Black Heart of the Forest (EL 10): A deadwood revenant has cursed or slain an entire logging camp and the men there are desperate for help. Although the loggers know where she is, they are powerless to stop her. She waits for them in the center of a small open glade, flanked by two charmed dire badgers. Lurking in the foliage just out of sight are eight elf warriors (1st level), an elf druid (5th level), and an evil treant called Gegnaeik. The elves fight because the deadwood revenant has threatened to curse their tribe; Gegnaeik fights because it wants to. The treant and the dire badgers enter melee with the enemy while the elves attack with bows and swords and try to screen the druid from harm. The deadwood revenant immediately falls back to the treeline to brandish her magic along with the druid.

Retribution (EL 8): A party of dwarf warriors from a nearby surface community recently led a failed attack against a deadwood revenant. She managed to charm a creature the locals call "Onefang," a very old and normally peaceful dire bear that lives deep in the forest, and she plans to use him in a counterattack. Onefang knows only to defend the deadwood revenant. Her plan is to reveal herself to the community in broad daylight, fixing onlookers with a cold stare and waiting for the inevitable (and likely impotent) attacks, which sends her beast into a protective rage. She then watches and speaks occasional curses on onlookers, vanishing back into the forest only after the dire bear has been defeated.

ECOLOGY

Deadwood revenants protect the natural order around them by punishing those who would disrupt it. They do not need to eat, nor do they crave to "feed" on the living as some undead do.

Deadwood revenants do not gather in groups and they interact with other woodland creatures only so far as is necessary. They often form a shaky alliance with nearby humanoid druid groves; they leave each other alone, for each knows the other's existence benefits the forest. This lasts only as long as the druids do indeed benefit the forest. Should they do it harm or take sides with their humanoid kin, even they are not safe from the deadwood revenant's wrath.

Environment: Deadwood revenants are bound to the deepest and oldest forests, where the tallest oaks grow—or at least, to the grounds on which such a forest used to stand. They are not bound to a single tree as dryads are, but they never wander out of sight of the forest in which their oak once stood or the earth on which that forest once grew.

Typical Physical Characteristics: A deadwood revenant appears to be the same size as a human or elven maiden, much like a dryad, but being incorporeal she is completely weightless. An individual deadwood revenant's appearance varies according to the means by which her oak (and thus she herself) died. For example, a dryad killed in a forest fire might manifest as a deadwood revenant with skin that appears black and charred.

Alignment: Deadwood revenants are always neutral evil, representing the coldest and darkest aspects of nature.

TYPICAL TREASURE

Deadwood revenants are incorporeal and care nothing for worldly treasures, although their allies or minions might.

DEADWOOD REVENANT LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (religion) can learn more about deadwood revenants. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including information for lower DCs. A Knowledge (nature) check can also be used to learn more about the deadwood revenant's nature and origin.

Knowledge (religion)

DC	Result
16	This creature is a deadwood revenant, the spectral remains of a dryad. This result reveals all undead and incorporeal traits.
21	Deadwood revenants are masters of curses, and are mildly skilled at enchantment and plant magic. Attacking a deadwood revenant or damaging a tree within sight of her brings down her curse upon you.
26	A deadwood revenant may choose to strengthen her curse on someone so it cannot be removed while she lives. Doing this binds her to the victim allowing him to intuit the location of the deadwood revenant who cursed him.

Knowledge (nature)

DC	Result
16	This is a deadwood revenant, the spirit of a dryad who's oak was destroyed before her eyes. Like most such spirits she seeks revenge.
21	A deadwood revenant is powered by the darkest aspects of nature, brought back to make humanoids pay for their crimes against it. Its very presence brings ill fortune to humans and their ilk.

ARCANE BOTANICA

SAPLINGS, SPROUTS, SPELLS, AND SEEDS

by Scott Noel • illustrated by Julie Dillon

Magic courses through and shapes the Great Wheel and all its many worlds, giving rise to no end of wondrous life. Dragons, basilisks, unicorns, and myriad other magical creatures populate the vast and varied existences. Yet, magic's effect on life is not limited to the animal kingdom. In many ways, the natural and magical evolution of flora from mystical energies is more important than the evolution (forced or natural) of fauna. For while arcane mutation has produced a host of interesting monsters, the combination of magical energies and plants has enhanced commerce, created new tools, and in some inhospitable regions even allowed life to thrive.

Many different specialties exist within the study of arcane botany, although all of them divide into one of two schools of scholarly thought: the study and cultivation of plants from other planes and the application of magical development to mundane Material Plane plants.

Plants From Other Planes

The fields and forests (or their equivalents) of the various planes are rife with life: life that creatures of flesh and bone might never understand, but life nonetheless. Plants from other planes (even those that appear identical to those of the Material Plane) prove difficult to keep alive when transported from their native realities.

The few described here, although extremely rare, are understood well enough for sages, scholars, and planar botanists to attempt their upkeep. The following selections, while representative, reflects only a tiny fraction of naturally occurring planar plants.

Djinn Blossoms: First recorded on the Material Plane in the annals of the elven bard Kyravahne Rhylfahne, djinn blossoms often appear as part of the floral arrangements at royal wedding ceremonies. Djinn blossoms now serve as one of the more common arcane exotics cultivated for display in elven courts.

The mature plant resembles a large fern with branches like those of a quince emerging from between the fernlike fronds. On the Elemental Plane of Air these plants grow to truly enormous sizes, forming the foundation for the floating islands many creatures use as homes. On the Material Plane, the largest djinn blossoms documented grow to roughly 5 feet in diameter (although some sages claim to have raised specimens with diameters of almost 10 feet). Djinn blossoms maintain a strong link to their home plane and, as a result, a perpetual light breeze surrounds them. Rich with the lilac-like scent of the djinn blossom's flowers, these zephyrs form the principal reason the plant remains cultivated. Although the djinn blossom's perfume makes it popular, some cultivators prune the plant in a manner that prevents it from maturing. The stunted plant that results, (sometimes called a djinn fern) looks like a lush tropical fern and takes on a slightly bluish hue. Like djinn blossoms, these plants emit mild breezes in all directions. The winds of the stunted djinn ferns, however, lack scent.

Wearing a plucked djinn blossom flower provides a +2 bonus on all saves to resist inhaled poisons, toxic gasses, and magical spells and effects that rely on gasses, clouds, or fogs (such as *cloudkill*). In addition, the djinn blossom can be made into a perfume with a successful DC 20 Craft (alchemy) check. This perfume grants a +2 bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks. Both a plucked blossom and a dose of perfume last for 24 hours after application.

A djinn blossom grows to its full size in roughly a year, after which time it requires even more careful tending and pruning, lest it shifts back to the Elemental Plane of Air. A gardener caring for a mature djinn blossom (or djinn fern) must continue to make a check every month, with two failures in a row resulting in the plant returning to the Elemental Plane of Air. Provided a djinn blossom is cared for properly it can live for centuries.

A healthy mature djinn blossom sells for 3,000 gp (a djinn fern for 2,000 gp). A djinn blossom bulb sells for at least 10,000 gp and can produce 1d4+2 plants. A dose of djinn blossom perfume costs 400 gp.

Nahre Lotus: Said to be the most coveted of all magical plants, these gorgeous water lilies originally

Cultivation and Care

A potential cultivator can successfully plant a seedling with a Knowledge (nature) or Profession (gardener) check at the list DC. After that, most plants require regular care in the form of an additional check (at the same DC) at the listed interval. Failing one check results in a penalty (in most cases) on the next check. Failing two checks in a row results in the plant's death. The following table lists the DCs, time intervals, and resultant penalties of all the plants in this article.

Some particularly robust plants (such as year-old orevine and glowvine) do not require constant care. Other plants have special rules regarding their cultivation and care, as listed under their individual descriptions.

Plant	DC	Frequency	Penalty
Aelfengrape	15	One month	–4
Coldwood	15	One year	–2
Djinn Blossom, (first year)	20	One month	–2
Djinn Blossom, (after first year)	—	—	—
Fey Cherry	15	One decade	–2
Flame Clove	15	One week	—
Glowvine, (planting)	20	—	—
Lakeleaf	15	Two weeks	–2
Lichbriar, (unattached)	30	One day	–4
Nahre Lotus	25	One month	–2
Orevine	30	One month	–4
Salamander Orchid	30	One month	–6
Tahtoalehti, (planting)	40	—	—

appeared on the Material Plane near a place known as the Nahre Wastes (hence their name).

The roots of a Nahre lotus reach into the Elemental Plane of Water and draw fluid across the planes to flow out of their blossoms. A healthy, mature Nahre lotus draws water through to the Material Plane at rates of up to 50 gallons per day. The sultans of Nahre cultivate these precious plants in gigantic reflecting pools carved from polished marble. These pools, and the pure sweet water produced by the mystic plants they host, are the source of life for many in the desert wastes. A Nahre lotus looks very much like a lotus or water lily. The broad leaves of the Nahre lotus stretch approximately 3 feet long and 2 feet across at their widest point, and its blossoms frequently reach the size of a man's head. The leaves are emerald green and refract light much like gently moving water. The petals on the Nahre blossom, which has no stalk but rather rests directly on the leaves, are a brilliant pink and gold, like clouds during a tropical sunset.

Cultivation of the these plants requires abundant light and large pools of water (at least 100 gallons per plant). Transporting a Nahre lotus between pools requires another check which, if failed, results in the death of the plant. A dead Nahre lotus left in water for an hour or more creates a blight deadly to other plants (including plant creatures) but only mildly unpleasant to nonplant creatures. The blight functions like a poison that only affects plants (contact; Fort DC 12; initial damage death, secondary damage 2d6 Con) and loses its potency seconds after the dead lotus is removed. A well-tended Nahre lotus can live up to 150 years.

Because of its ability to produce limitless pure water, a healthy and successfully installed mature Nahre lotus plant sells for 10,000 gp. Even an untested seedling or ailing mature plant sells for 500 gp. A dead Nahre lotus plant sealed in a glass vial filled with water (used as a grenadelike weapon against plant creatures) sells for 200 gp.

Orevine: Similar in color and appearance to certain varieties of wine grape, the source plant for orevine originated on the Elemental Plane of Earth. That progenitor cutting, modified over scores of generations by magical alteration and selective breeding, eventually produced the various strains of orevine known today.

Orevine plants send incredibly fine roots through stone and earth to find specific metals. Some say the orevine even reaches across the multiverse to tap into veins that exist only on other planes. A vine draws on the metal to which it is keyed, in much the same manner that nonmagical plants feed on nutrients in the soil around them, concentrating the metal in the fibers of the plant. When harvested, the plant easily gives up the metal within it. Most strains of orevine concentrate the extracted metal in the fruit or vine, while a few species collect the ore in the sap (the harvesting of which frequently leads to the plants' death).

Orevine cultivation is extremely difficult, making it a relatively rare endeavor even among the ranks of arcane horticulturists. If the target mineral does not exist in even trace quantities within 100 feet of the plant, it withers and dies within a week. In order to survive and extract metals, the orevine requires water and sunlight.

Extracting the metal from an orevine plant requires a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check to do so without killing it. A cultivator can extract the metal once per month and then burn away the harvested portions of the plant to expose the pure metal (worth 20% of the plant's value). An orevine plant extracts all available metal within reach in 3d6 months.

An orevine plant keyed to a base metal (copper or iron) sells for 2,000 gp and produces 400 gp of metal in a month, a cutting keyed to a precious metal (silver or gold) sells for 5,000 gp

and produces 1,000 gp of metal in a month, and a vine keyed to an ultrarare metal (platinum, mithral, or adamantine) sells for 10,000 gp and produces 2,000 gp of metal in a month.

Salamander Orchids: Dwarven emissaries to the City of Brass on the Elemental Plane of Fire first discovered these gorgeous plants in the palace gardens of the efreeti scholar Azzyz Sahladyn Ybn Rhajafadyl. Since then, the plants have appeared infrequently within the largest dwarven holds or salamander warrens on the Material Plane.

Similar in form to many types of cattleyas orchids, the stalks and leaves of a salamander orchid are composed of red-hot brass, which support blossoms of gold and crimson flame. The completely smokeless flame of the salamander orchid draws all of its energy from the Elemental Plane of Fire and so does not require fuel. A single salamander orchid emits the same amount of light and heat as a torch. The flame blossom of the salamander orchid moves and shifts like all fire, but more slowly, in an almost liquid dance (rather than the snapping of normal flame).

Because of its tie with the Elemental Plane of Fire, a salamander orchid blossom reduces the cost of creating a flaming or flame burst weapon by 500 gp and 100 XP.

Coaxing a salamander orchid to survive on the Material Plane is best pursued as a labor of love, for it is both exceptionally costly and exceedingly difficult. To survive on the Material Plane, a salamander orchid requires a vial's worth of highly refined oil costing 25 gp once per month. Handling the plant requires special instruments that can withstand the plant's heat, similar to a blacksmith's tools. If a salamander orchid is handled without such equipment the handler takes 1d6 points of fire damage every round.

Salamander orchids are extremely valuable to those who collect exotic plants. A single healthy mature plant sells for 2,500 gp. Properly tended, with soil changed annually, a salamander orchid can live up to 125 years.

Treasures From the Greenhouse Laboratories

A relaxing pastime for many, gardening remains a common pursuit among mages and alchemists, who often require specific plants and herbs for their crafts and experiments. It is little wonder, then, that arcane spellcasters of many stripes marry their profession with their pastime and create plants imbued with magical properties.

The small sampling of species here just scratches the surface of the wonder to be found in the greenhouses and fields of the arcane gardener.

Aelfengrape: Originally a true grape, elven wizards modified aelfengrape to use it for a variety of purposes all year round. Aelfengrape closely resembles the terrestrial vines that are its heritage, but rather than all of the grapes coming to maturity in one season, clusters of aelfengrape ripen throughout the year. Thus, flower clusters and ripe grapes appear on the vine in all seasons. The flowers of aelfengrape closely resembles those of a plumeria in both shape and fragrance.

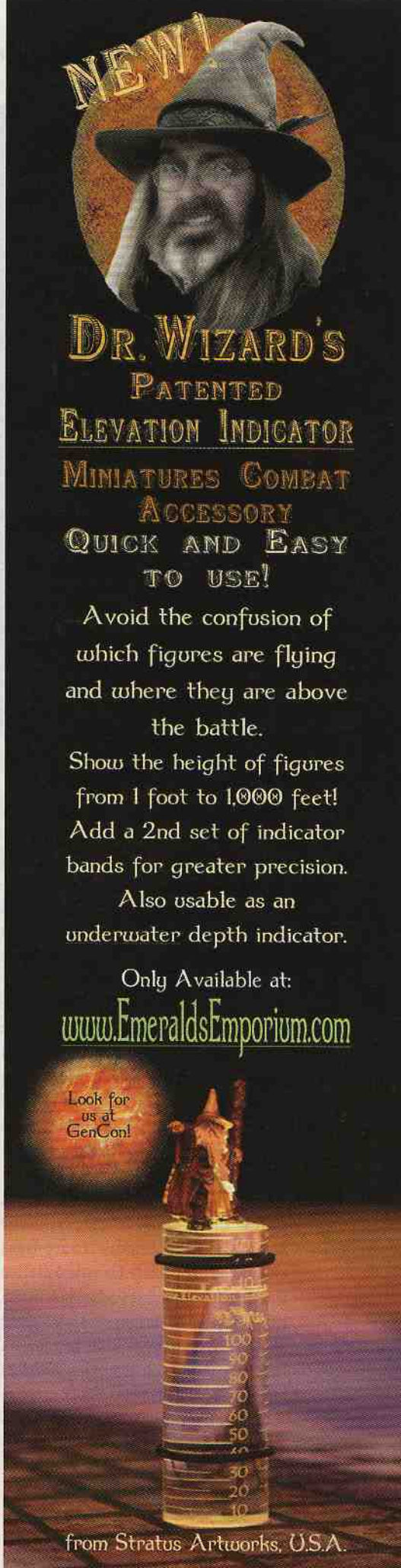
The leaf veins, flowers, and fruits of aelfengrape provide a gentle illumination (equal to a candle). The true magic of the aelfengrape, however, comes in its utility. Aelfengrape fruit is highly nutritious (a handful provides the equivalent nourishment of one meal) and makes a wine of extraordinary potency (if not of a particularly refined taste). The flowers are also edible and make a sweet aromatic tea, while the leaves (raw or cooked) appear in many recipes. Even the woody vine has many applications, finding use in a variety of crafts.

Maintaining the health of an aelfengrape plant requires the monthly application of magical components costing 25 gp.

A single healthy mature plant sells for 100 gp. Properly tended, an aelfengrape vine can live up to 700 years.

Coldwood: Many fey creatures have a special susceptibility to cold iron. This weakness has led alchemists and arcane gardeners among the fey to develop coldwood. First adapted from natural hickory, coldwood replaces iron in most ways, allowing fey smiths to craft strong weapons and sturdy armors. Coldwood also allows druids to wear armor types usually made of metal.

Coldwood grows very much like hickory, only slightly slower, reaching its mature size in roughly two decades. The timber of the coldwood can be used for the crafting of any item normally made from steel, resulting in an object with the same hardness, strength, weight, and edge-holding properties of good-quality steel. Coldwood is difficult to work and harder still to cultivate, making it and the items made from it extremely expensive. The DC of any item crafted of coldwood is always 8 higher than the same item made from steel.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Weapons or armors fashioned from coldwood are always masterwork items (the masterwork cost is included in the prices given below). Harvesting viable coldwood from a coldwood tree requires a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) or DC 15 Profession (logger) check. A successful check provides 1 pound of material per five years of growth (to a maximum of 100 pounds of coldwood).

For a coldwood tree to thrive it requires regular attention. Transplanting a coldwood tree or taking a viable cutting from one requires a DC 25 Knowledge (nature) or Profession (gardener) check.

A single healthy coldwood sapling sells for 500 gp. Properly tended, a coldwood tree can live for thousands of years.

Type of Coldwood Item	Item Cost Modifier
Ammunition	+50 gp
Light armor	+500 gp
Medium armor	+2,000 gp
Heavy armor	+4,500 gp
Shield	+500 gp
Weapon	+2,000 gp
Other items	+250 gp/lb.

Fey Cherry: The sailors of the great north sea sing of how each race was shaped by the deities from trees: humans from ash and alder, halflings from willows, gnomes from the heartwood of apple trees, dwarves from the roots of a mighty oak, and elves from the boughs of a flowering cherry. Sages speculate that the song might have originated with traders seeing the fey cherry palaces on faraway elven isles.

Valued for their great beauty as well as their utility, fey cherry closely resemble the common cherry trees cultivated in orchards, save only for their enormous size. Properly tended, they can grow larger than a giant sequoia, rising more than 500 feet in height with a trunk diameter of 50 feet at the base. These arboreal giants are much more than merely larger versions of their mundane cousins. Fey cherry trees possess a supernatural strength that makes them ideal platforms for tree-based dwellings. Their relatively narrow but long leaves provide a mystical protection from the weather, moderating the temperature within the tree's canopy and preventing most wind, rain, and snow from pushing through (the canopy reduces wind beneath its boughs by 20 miles per hour). Within the canopy, the temperature never drops below 50 degrees nor rises above 80 degrees. Wood and leaves harvested from a fey cherry do not carry the tree's magic with them, but items made from fey cherry wood cost 10% less gp and XP to enhance magically. While it produces blossoms every year, a fey cherry tree only creates cherries once a decade. A fey cherry provides a creature who eats it with the benefits of a *protection from evil* spell for 5 minutes (CL 5th) once per day. Eating more than one fey cherry per day grants no additional effect. Once picked, a fey cherry retains its magical property for 1 day; after that time it simply becomes a normal cherry. *Gentle repose* lengthens the cherry's magical properties for the duration of the spell.

A fey cherry tree requires little attention. Transplanting a fey cherry tree or taking a viable cutting from one requires a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) or Profession (gardener) check.

A single healthy fey cherry sapling sells for 3,000 gp. Properly tended, a fey cherry tree can live indefinitely.

Flame Clove: A favorite with travelers, flame clove is a garliclike herb imbued with energy from the Elemental Plane of Fire.

Raw flame clove contains a mild but unpleasant poison (ingested; Fort DC 13; initial damage 1d6 fire, secondary damage 1 Dex). When boiled in salt water and crushed and blended into food, however, flame clove has a taste similar to garlic and keeps hot food hot for 1d4 days without drying out and with no outside heat source.

Adding a sprig of flame clove to alchemist's fire (which must be done when crafting the alchemist's fire originally) makes for a more potent batch. This enhanced alchemist's fire deals double the damage of normal alchemist's fire and burns for twice as long.

Flame clove is remarkably easy to grow and reaches maturity a mere five weeks after planting and remains viable for three weeks after that.

A single healthy mature bulb sells for 20 gp.

Glowvine: Mages have long cultivated a number of varieties of glowvine

for various types of soil and climates. The root plant for glowvine is the morning glory it so closely resembles, save the nocturnal blossoms.

Opening in the early evening and then closing again with the coming of dawn, the blossoms on each foot-long stretch of glowvine give off the same amount of light as a torch. Glowvine clings to walls and trellises in a manner identical to morning glory plants, and it grows almost as fast.

Glowvine grows 1 foot every two weeks. Once per month, a DC 15 Profession (gardener) check can be attempted to prevent a glowvine from growing for the following month.

A single healthy seedling sells for 500 gp.

Lakeleaf: This parsleylike herb traces its ancestry back to plants growing along the banks of the River Oceanus.

When crushed and rubbed onto meat, the lakeleaf ensures the meat never dries out, regardless of how overcooked it is and even if set on fire. Chefs with expertise in blackened dishes favor the flavorless lakeleaf in their recipes.

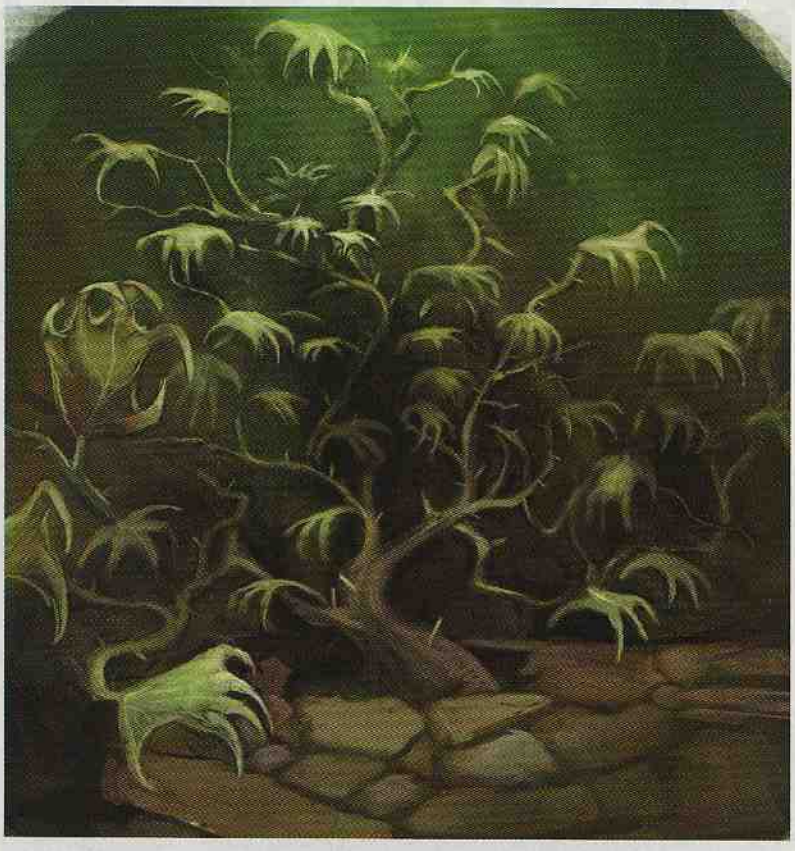
Using sprig of lakeleaf when casting *gentle repose* double's the spell's duration. This increase does not stack with the effects of the Extend Spell feat.

Lakeleaf reaches maturity fourteen weeks after planting and remains viable for five weeks after that.

A single healthy mature sprig sells for 20 gp.

Lichbriar: First created by the Lich King Amryn Sul to foster the complete and excruciating destruction of treacherous servants' minds and bodies, lichbriar can thrive only in very specific conditions.

Similar in appearance to bougainvillea, lichbriar—also known as rackthorne, hellroot, and doomrose—can reach a length of up to 50 feet under ideal conditions. Lichbriar grows and spreads as a canelike vine with long, sharp, poisonous thorns and fine hooks (used to cling to almost any surface), covering and spreading



much like ivy. Its pale green leaves, marbled with bone-white veins, are vaguely hand shaped, with tips that curl at the end. As the doomrose pseudonym suggests, the blossoms of the lichbriar—which grow densely over all its vines—closely resemble roses with petals of a faintly iridescent white.

In order for a lichthorn to grow, it must sink its myriad hooks into a living creature, and as the vine grows an increasing number of hooks embrace its helpless victim. As the hooks spread, so too do the plant's thorns, with more scratching and impaling themselves in the victim each day, introducing ever-increasing levels of poison. Lichbriar is not a particularly strong plant and has no motive ability. In order for lichbriar to take root and feed, its victim must remain still for at least one day to allow the plant to latch on with its hooks. A victim who is not immobilized can attempt to struggle free on the first day by making a DC 5 Strength check. The DC of the check increases by +5 every day until it reaches DC 20, at which point it increases by +2 per day thereafter. Failing the Strength check results in the victim being pinned, as if grappled. With every attempt a victim makes to escape he takes 1d6 points of damage from the thorns and is injected with poison (injury; Fort DC 14; initial and secondary damage 1d2 Strength + 1d4 Dexterity).

Beginning on the second day, as long as the lichbriar remains attached to its victim, it draws away life energy in the form of experience points. On the second day (the first day of XP drain), the lichbriar steals 10 XP. The number of XP drained doubles each day (20 XP on the third day of taking root, 40 XP on the fourth day of taking root, and so on) until the victim is reduced to 0 XP. At that point, the victim dies. This experience drain is permanent and can only be reversed by a *miracle* or *wish*.

Successful handling of lichbriar requires a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check every round it is touched.

Druids and Magical Plants

The creation and care of magical plants is almost wholly the purview of arcane spellcasters. Druids—who seem the mostly likely candidates to breed, cultivate, and adapt magical plants—only occasionally do so. Most nonevil druids find the artificial enhancement and manipulation of plants to serve the needs of mages an extremely heavy-handed and distasteful use of magic.

Druids who come across such altered plants typically try not to interact with them. In the case where the plant's presence unbalances the natural order most druids attempt to either remove the plant or direct it into a more natural cycle.

When queried as to the creation and care of such plants, most druids feign ignorance or try to misdirect the questioner with answers they know to be false.

A failed check indicates the handler pricked himself with a thorn, taking 1d6 points of damage and injecting himself with the poison.

Lichbriar requires a great deal of water when not feeding off a victim. When attached to a victim, lichbriar is immune to cold and electricity damage and gains fire resistance 10. Planting a seedling, transplanting one, or taking a cutting require a DC 20 Knowledge (nature) or Profession (gardener) check. When feeding off a victim, lichbriar needs no further maintenance or attention, although a DC 30 Profession (gardener) check can be attempted to prevent a lichbriar from growing any larger (and thus draining any additional XP). A later DC 20 Profession (gardener) check can restart the plant's growth, allowing it to drain XP again.

A single healthy seedling sells for 5,000 gp.

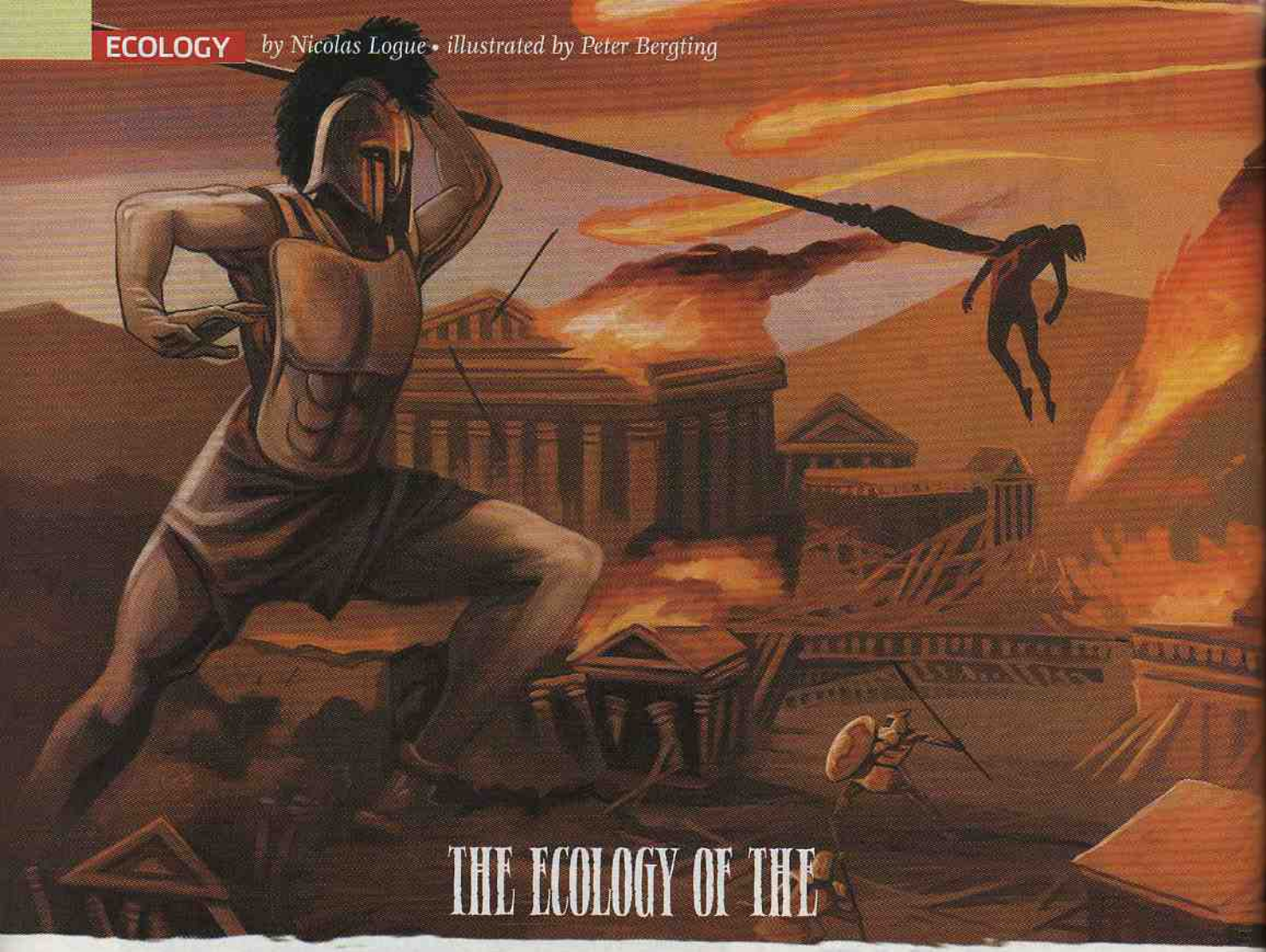
Tahtoalehti (Wishfern): Tahtoalehti—the most treasured, yet hardest to raise, of all magical plants—also goes by the common name of wishfern. Tahtoalehti closely resembles ferns from the temperate rainforests of the northern coasts, save that it grows much larger and into a deeper, darker shade of green. This incredible fern marries the power of magic with the plant kingdom's ability to restore itself and draw energy from the sun.

A tahtaolehti plant only blooms once every 1d100 years, and always on the night of the winter solstice. For that one night, the wishfern wears a flower of unparalleled beauty, a fist-sized blossom of luminous white. The blossom contains incredible power, for if properly harvested without bruise or damage (requiring a DC 40 Profession [gardener] check) it grants one *wish*, as the spell cast by a 20th-level sorcerer. With the coming of the sun the blossom withers and disintegrates, living behind a single seed, whether or not it granted a wish.

Notoriously difficult to grow, in part because it requires almost total absence of contact, a tahtaolehti only blooms in an isolated forest setting at least 100 miles from any other wishfern. Planting or transplanting a viable seed without killing it requires a DC 40 Knowledge (nature) or Profession (gardener) check. Once planted, a wishfern is best left alone, as the merest touch from a living creature can kill it. Whenever a living creature touches a wishfern without first succeeding at a DC 40 Profession (gardener) check, the plant must attempt a DC 12 Fort save (with a +0 bonus) or die. As a result, most growers protect their tahtoalehti with spells and natural barriers rather than guards. Any attempt to coax a wishfern to produce its blossom early or to push it to produce multiple blossoms at once results in the immediate death of the plant.

A single healthy seed sells for 25,000 gp.

by Nicolas Logue • illustrated by Peter Bergting



THE ECOLOGY OF THE TITAN

"I will advance a terrible right arm
"Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
"bid old Saturn take his throne again."
—"Hyperion," John Keats

Few beings can contend with the children of the multiverse. What are even angels or demons—mere spawn of mortal virtues and vices—to do in the face of a titan's godlike fury? Dragons, as old as mountains and wise as the wind, are revealed as mewling babes when matched to a titan's timeless intellect. Immortal, brimming with untold power, and as unpredictable as a storm-tossed sea, the titans are feared even by deities, and are understood by few. Theirs is a tale of divine battle, deific vengeance, and eternal exile. Cast out of paradise to brood, rule, and destroy, they walk the world. Only fools do not bow before them or flee at their approach.

HISTORY OF THE TITAN

In a time before time, long before the churning cosmos found its form, gods and goddesses reached into primordial chaos and sculpted perfection from its mutable essence. Thus, the titans were born. The deities adored them more than creation itself. The titans' every whim was doted upon. Their wishes were granted even before they formed in their minds. As time wore on, the titans grew more demanding of their deific progenitors. No boon seemed too great to ask.

The titans rose to a respected place at their masters' sides to help rule over creation. As feuds broke out among the gods and goddesses, the titans led their divine armies in battle. The mightiest among them grappled with deities, proving victorious on too many occasions to comfort godkind at large. As the greatest titans realized their power rivaled the gods, their demands became increasingly unsettling.

Eventually, the titans committed offenses their makers could no longer ignore. The titans created children of their own nearly equal to themselves in glory and power, birthing the first giants into the world out of shards of their own celestial essence. The titans loved their new children as dearly as the gods once lavished affection upon them. They promised their offspring an entire plane of existence, a world where the giants would rule as deities in their own right.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE TITAN

The following table shows the results of a Knowledge (the planes) check as it relates to titans. Information about titans is most likely to come from servants of ancient deities, planar scholars, and residents of Arborea or Carceri. The titan appears on page 242 of the *Monster Manual*.

Knowledge (the planes)

DC	Result
31	This gigantic creature is a titan, a being of fickle whims and unbridled power. This result reveals all outsider traits.
36	Titans are incredably strong, capable of destroying nearly anything they encounter with their physical strength and magical prowess. This result reveals several of a titan's noteworthy spell-like abilities.
41	The titans were among the first creations of the deities and rebeled against them. Those who survived this war were scattered across the planes.
46	Cronus, the most powerful of the titans, still rages against the deities in a Carcarian prison forged millenia ago.

The gods were outraged. The power to create was theirs alone. The deities looked on the giants as abominations and their fury was boundless. Still, they could not bring themselves to punish their beloved titans. The deities offered a compromise: they would spare the giants but cast them down to the Material Plane, not to rule, but to exist among thousands of other lesser races. The deities had began to regret their mistake in creating children rivaling themselves in might and begat

POWER OF THE TITANS

Some titans possess unique sets of spell-like abilities different from those given in the *Monster Manual*. These titans lose *etherealness, levitate, meteor swarm, persistent image,* and *summon nature's ally IX* but gain the following spells in their place.

Stormbringer: Some titans are tied to the fury of the storms. They gain the following spell-like abilities:

At will–*control weather, gaseous form, water breathing, wind wall*
3/day–*whirlwind, wind walk*
1/day–*storm of vengeance*

Iconoclast: Refusing to be shackled or controlled, some titans possess powers that make them impossible to manipulate.

At will–*break enchantment, freedom of movement, greater teleport*
3/day–*mind blank, destruction*
1/day–*freedom*

new offspring, far inferior to the titans in power. The titans were not satisfied. Their rage at the offer was doubled by the gods' designs to spawn new children to vie with the titans. The titans saw the creation of these new races as an attempt to supplant them. For the first time, the titans felt their place in the cosmos threatened. They raised their mighty fists against their divine masters. The gods found themselves under attack.

The heaven-shaking conflict that followed lasted an age. Thousands of titans and hundreds of gods perished before the conflict finally came to a halt. The face of creation was savaged, and the multiverse nearly unraveled. Finally, though, the gods emerged victorious.

Realizing they could never risk such a cataclysmic event again, the deities convened a divine tribunal and after much deliberation decreed the titans would be scattered across the infinite planes—the most dangerous among them imprisoned on Carceri for all time. The gods and goddesses also summarily hurled the giants to the Material Plane, robbing them of any vestige of divinity. Those few titans who stood by their makers during the war earned reprieve and were allowed to remain on Arborea. Slowly they earned back their fickle divine masters' trust, while their brethren were condemned to wander for eternity, forever scorned by their deific parents.

PHYSIOLOGY OF THE TITAN

Titans are specimens of absolute physical perfection. They are the pinnacle of might, agility, mental acuity, and will. Their form is a mirror to glory. The vainest mortals labor through staggering regimens of exercise and employ epic magic in hopes of even drawing close to the physical magnificence and comeliness of titankind. These sad fools always fall dismally short. Titans' muscles are denser than adamantine and more pliable than the supplest bamboo. They see in the dark as well as any fiend, and in light a hawk is nearly blind by comparison. When pleased, their voices are like honey poured over a golden lute's strings. When enraged, their bellows shatter mountains and shout-down any tempest's thunder.

Among the strongest of any other creatures, titans delight in their varied prowess. They revel in their near-godly might and enjoy flouting their physical superiority over creatures twice their size. Titans take great pride in besting gargantuan dragons in contests of physical mastery.

Titans are as eternal as their divine masters. They do not age, nor do they require sleep or sustenance, although they often enjoy rich food and guzzle barrels of sweet-nectar spirits for sheer pleasure alone. More malicious specimens enjoy eating those who dare an audience, casually picking them up and pulping their heads as a man might enjoy a succulent grape.

PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIETY OF THE TITAN

Titans were birthed from raw chaos. There is no constant by which one might rate a titan's emotions, and predictability is definitely not among their flaws. For a titan, a morning of towering rage begets a mirthful midday meal, and an evening of unquenchable lust. What pleases them one moment is just as likely to draw their ire the next. Parlaying with a titan is dangerous, and pity those who must negotiate terms with these frenzied forces of the universe. A titan's courtesy might be more civil than any king's at first, but guests can never tell when their hosts might take it upon themselves to mash them flat, just to see what shape the stains their pulped bodies make on the floor.

The only exception comes when titans treat with one another. For some inexplicable reason, titans (even those with divergent takes on good and evil) regard each other with great civility and respect at all times. No titan knowingly crosses another unless a direct challenge is made. These challenges are almost always accepted. When titans clash, the world trembles and others would do well not to come between them.

A key factor in titans' views of the world is their immortality. They are timeless and have existed since the dawn of creation. They have watched civilizations rise and fall, borne witness to the extermination of entire races, and seen gods dethroned. They are blessed with a god's lifespan and unburdened by any responsibilities of divinity. Needless to say, little surprises a titan and nothing impresses one. A novelty they have not before witnessed, with which to stave off the tedium of eternity, is worth more than a mountain of diamonds. Many bards risked their lives in attempts to earn a titan's favor with an unheard tale or song. Most ended up smeared into gory paste as punishment for their failure.

Titans believe (rightly so) that they are superior to all mortal beings. They love to challenge mortals to impossibly difficult (and often deadly) competitions. Defeating a titan in one of these contests earns respect—and a possibly a boon.

ADVANCED TITAN

Cronus first gained his moniker of God-slayer after he castrated and killed his

own father, Uranus, a god of the Sun. His act of patricide ignited the war between gods and titans, and Cronus led his people's revolt for centuries. He felled more than one hundred gods in personal combat. He basked in the fiery rays of Pelor's hottest flames, mocked Obad-Hai's mightiest blast of tree-rending wind, and fought five thousand passes with Heironeous and Hextor long before the half-brothers forsook their kinship and swore eternal enmity. His fury could not be slaked, and time and time again he repelled the gods' assaults and shattered every attempt of theirs to imprison him.

Finally, the deities bent their ear to Kurtulmak, cunning kobold god of traps, who concocted one of the most brilliant snares ever conceived. The gods ambushed Cronus en force. While the dwarf gods drew his ire, Boccob, Garl Glittergold, Olidimmara, and Wee Jas wove their most powerful enchantments, melded flawlessly with potent illusions. Fharlanghn leveled powerful translocation magic upon the titan as well. Cronus was instantly transported to a powerful prison the gods prepared in Carceri. There, Cronus, his mind vexed and eternal form weakened by powerful spells and illusory effects, believes he still wages his war against the gods. For millennia he has "battled" in a dreamscape of the gods' collective design, ensorcelled for all time.

Or so the gods hoped. They believed eventually the titan would tire of his war or, better, be slain in phantom combat. Instead, Cronus has fought through the ages, brutally slaying the gods one by one in his phantasmal prison. The gods watched grimly as each of them fell to Cronus' glaive, and now their numbers dwindle. If the titan slays every phantom god, the potent magic befuddling his mind might crumble. When it does, Cronus' rage at the gods' trickery promises their doom. He will shrug off the mighty shackles of Carceri's greatest prison and regain his powers to menace the heavens. The gods have seen their doom in their own illusionary trap, and they fear they might not be able to stand against Cronus. Perhaps a band of mighty champions whose powers rival the deities themselves are creation's only hope.

CRONUS **CR 56**

Advanced titan barbarian 20, legendary dreadnought 10

CE Gargantuan outsider (chaotic, extraplanar)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 feet.; Listen +64, Spot +61

Languages Abyssal, Common, Celestial, Draconic, Giant

AC 64, touch 9, flat-footed 61; Dodge, Mobility; improved uncanny dodge

hp 1,578 hp (61 HD), fast healing 3; **DR** 15/lawful, 23/—

SR 32

Fort +54, **Ref** +31, **Will** +37

Speed 70 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee *+15 Colossal adamantine glaive* +99/+94/+89/+84 (6d8+58/19–20/×3 + 2d6 + DC 69 Fort save or die)

Space 20 ft. **Reach** 20 ft.

Base Atk +56; Grp +97

Atk Options Awesome Blow, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, rage 6/day

Special Actions unmovable 2/day, unstoppable 2/day

Spells-like Abilities (CL 20th) 1/day—*Bigby's crushing hand* (DC 27),

EPIC FEATS EXPLANATION

Cronus employs several feats from the *Epic Level Handbook*, here is a brief summary of their effects:

Chaotic Rage: Your weapon deals +2d6 points of damage while you rage.

Damage Reduction: You gain damage reduction 3/—. This feat stacks with itself.

Devastating Critical: When you score a critical hit with the weapon you have selected, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Str modifier) or die instantly. Creatures immune to critical hits can't be affected by this feat.

Epic Weapon Focus: Add a +2 bonus on all attack rolls you make with the selected weapon.

Fast Healing: You gain fast healing 3.

Overwhelming Critical: You deal +1d6 points of extra damage on a successful critical hit. If the weapon's critical multiplier is ×3, add 2d6 points of extra damage instead.

Terrifying Rage: Any enemy that views you while you are raging must make a Will save opposed by your Intimidate check or become panicked (if it has fewer Hit Dice than you) or shaken (if it has Hit Dice equal to or up to twice yours) for 4d6 rounds.

gate, maze, meteor swarm (DC 27)
3/day—*etherealness, word of chaos* (DC 25), *summon nature's ally IX*
At will—*bestow curse* (DC 22), *chain lightning* (DC 24), *charm monster* (DC 26), *cure critical wounds, deeper darkness, fire storm* (DC 26), *greater dispel magic, hold monster* (DC 23), *invisibility, invisibility purge, levitate, persistent image* (DC 23), *unholy blight* (DC 23)

Abilities Str 69, Dex 16, Con 50, Int 20, Wis 28, Cha 27

SQ change shape, greater rage, mighty rage, outsider traits, oversized weapon, shrug off punishment, thick skinned, tireless rage, trap sense +6

Feats Awesome Blow, Blind-Fight, Chaotic Rage, Cleave, Damage Reduction ×4, Devastating Critical (glaive), Epic Weapon Focus (glaive), Fast Healing, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (glaive), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Overwhelming Critical (glaive), Power Attack, Quicken Spell-like Ability (*chain lightning, firestorm, greater dispel magic*), Terrifying Rage, Weapon Focus (glaive)

Skills Climb +61, Diplomacy +33, Hide +16, Intimidate +72, Jump +66, Knowledge (history) +37, Knowledge (religion) +25, Knowledge (the planes) +25, Listen +64, Move Silently +34, Survival +41 (+43 on other planes), Swim +55, Spot +61, Tumble +39

Possessions *+20 masterwork breastplate, +15 adamantine glaive, ring of epic protection +7, belt of epic strength +12, ring of regeneration, wings of flying*

Rage (Ex) When he rages, Cronus's stats change as follows.

AC 62, touch 7, flat-footed 59
hp 1822
Fort +58, **Will** +41 (+45 versus enchantments)
Melee *+15 Colossal adamantine glaive* +103/+98/+93/+88 (6d8+62 +2d6 against creatures of lawful alignment/19–20/×3 + 2d6 + DC 69 Fort save or die)
Grp +101
Abilities Str 77, Con 58
Skills Climb +65, Jump +70, Swim +59

Unmovable (Ex) Twice per day, Cronus can add a +20 bonus to: avoid being grabbed with the improved grab ability; avoid the effects of a bull rush, trip attempt, or similar effect; a Strength check to avoid being moved physically or magically; or a saving throw.

Unstoppable (Ex) Twice per day, Cronus can add +20 to his Strength check to break or burst a door or item, make a DC 32 Strength check to break a *wall of force*, or apply a +20 bonus on a single attack roll.

Change Shape (Su) Cronus can assume the form of any Small or Medium humanoid. He retains his oversized weapon special attack regardless of form.

Oversized Weapon (Ex) Cronus can wield an oversized weapon one size category larger than himself (Colossal) without penalty.

Gazing Into the Abyss

By Eric L. Boyd • illustrated by Ben Wootten

To fight back against the rising savage tide, this article series presents you, the player, with the tips, tricks, and tools you need to avoid being swept away. While the pages of *Dungeon* present DMs with every vile plot and cunning monster needed to run the Savage Tide Adventure Path, *Dragon* offers details and options to help you stay on course. This month's installment offers information on dark pacts and promises you can strike with the denizens of the Abyss in order to gain an advantage over your enemies, but beware the costs of forging such oaths, for to do so risks an inexorable slide into darkness.

Adventure Tie

This installment of Savage Tidings links to the tenth episode of the Savage Tide Adventure path, "The Wells of Darkness," presented in *Dungeon* #148.

Dark Pacts and Promises

Like their diabolic counterparts, demons regularly enter into dark pacts with mortals, promising all manner of rewards in exchange for their service. Unlike the Faustian contracts offered by devils, however, demons change the terms of any deal as it suits them, making them unreliable. It is possible to negotiate with a demon with some success from a position of strength, so long as the demon is continually reminded of its relative weakness. Two of the more effective methods of dealing with demons include pact magic and certain conjuration (calling) spells, such as *planar ally* and *planar binding*.

Pact Magic

A pact magic practitioner, known as a binder, gains his power by bargaining with entities called vestiges—the remnants of once-living beings now trapped between life and death. Pact magic, including details on vestiges

Teeth of Dahlver-Nar

The *teeth of Dahlver-Nar* are fully detailed in *Tome of Magic*, pages 77–79. Three additional teeth, corresponding to the vestiges detailed in this article, have the following powers:

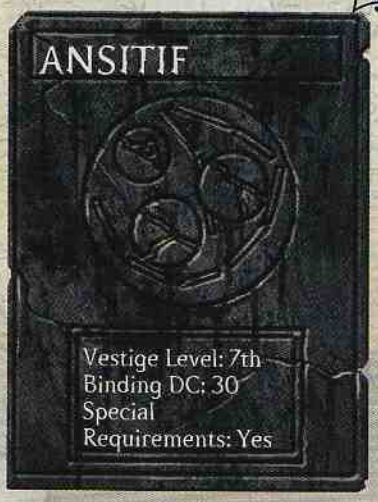
Ansitif: You can use *desecrate* three times per day. Faint evocation [evil]; CL 3rd; Price 10,800 gp.

Astaroth: You can use *augury* three times per day. Faint divination; CL 3rd; Price 10,800 gp.

Cabiri: You can use *clairaudience/clairvoyance* (seeing form only) once per day. Faint divination (scrying); CL 5th; Price 5,400 gp.

and binders, is fully detailed in *Tome of Magic*. Sample vestiges have appeared in *Tome of Magic*, *Dragon Magic*, DRAGON #341, DUNGEON #148, and in several articles on the Wizards of the Coast website (**wizards.com/dnd**), including the "Designing Your Own Vestige" article.

Ansitif, Astaroth, and Cabiri are demons transformed into vestiges by virtue of their imprisonment in the Wells of Darkness.



Ansitif the Befouler

Ansitif the Befouler loathes all evidence of religious faith, granting resistance to divine magic the power to call on the demon lords of the Abyss, to blasphemy, and to resist the cleansing power of fire.

Legend: Ansitif the Befouler is an ancient tanar'ri lord who rose to power in the wake of the obyriths' fall and quickly seized control of the 21st layer of the Abyss, now known as the Sixth Pyre. Although most demon lords hunger for the power of true gods, Ansitif was enraged by the very existence of divine beings. Unable to challenge most deities directly, the Befouler vented his fury through the corruption of religious sites and relics dedicated to true gods. At the height of his power, Ansitif's demesne was littered with the shattered relics of countless faiths and the ruins of desecrated temples drawn into the Abyss.

Up until his imprisonment, Ansitif delighted in the company of succubi, and he was one of Malcanthet's first lovers. It is said that the first succubi to become lilitus were born of their couplings, as the newly enthroned Queen of Succubi secretly drew on the Befouler's corruptive nature to unlock the ritual needed to transform her servitors.

Centuries ago, Ansitif joined with six tanar'ri allies—Cyndshyra of the Seven Torments, Felex'ja the Tiger King, Ixinix the Lord of Blackwater, Qij-na the Shattered, Rhindor'zt the Black Prince, and Wejindhastala the Tempest—to hunt down and destroy a powerful obyrith called the Malgoth, scattering his essence across the Abyss. Instead of triumph, the alliance's victory brought disaster. The affair took Ansitif and his allies away from their centers of power, and opportunistic demon lords assassinated or imprisoned each member of the alliance in turn. In the case of the Befouler, his most powerful general, a balor named Kardum, betrayed Ansitif and had him imprisoned in the Wells of Darkness on the 73rd layer of the Abyss. Kardum then went on to claim the title of Lord of the Balors, which he holds to this day.

Special Requirement: Ansitif requires that his seal be drawn using the broken remnants of a true deity's holy symbol.

Manifestation: The symbol before you erupts in flames, and a swarm of sparks leaps outward to scorch relics, holy symbols, and other signs of worship in the immediate vicinity. Gradually, the flames coalesce around the altar and begin to give forth a dark, cloying smoke. In the center of the smoke, flying sparks form a disembodied mouth that begins to speak.

Sign: Your hair and skin become blackened and scorched, as if briefly touched by fire.

Influence: Under Ansitif's influence, you become enraged by the presence of relics dedicated to true gods. The Befouler requires that you attempt to destroy or steal any relic dedicated to a true god that you discover.

Granted Abilities: Ansitif grants you the power to blaspheme against the true gods, to resist the spells of their divine servants, and to temporarily spurn your deity and pledge yourself to a demon lord of the Abyss. Harkening back to Ansitif's period of rule over the Sixth Pyre, the Befouler grants you immunity to fire.

Blasphemy: You can utter a *blasphemy*, as per the spell, three times per day (caster level equals your effective binder level).

Divine Resistance: You gain SR 12+ your effective binder level versus divine spells and spell-like abilities.

Fire Immunity: You gain immunity to fire.

Thrall to Demon: You gain the benefit of the Thrall to Demon feat: once per day, while performing an evil act, you may call upon your temporary demonic patron to add a +1 luck bonus on any one roll. If you are a

Three Faces of Astaroth

In the D&D multiverse, there are at least three planar beings who have gone by the name of Astaroth. Powerful beings sharing a name are not uncommon, for names held in common reduce the chances of mortal summonings. In the Abyss, Astaroth was a powerful demon lord, now believed to be dead but still reachable through pact magic. In the Nine Hells of Baator, Gargauth, the arch-devil-turned-deity who killed the demon lord Astaroth has since taken his name as an alias. Finally, a fallen angel named Astaroth the Unjustly Fallen is now a vestige as well. This article details the demon lord vestige named Astaroth.

cleric, you must replace your domains with domains granted by the demon lord to which you pledge (see *Fiendish Codex I*, 88), for as long as the pact is forged. You must pick the demon lord to which you temporarily pledge when you make the pact and cannot pick a different demon lord to venerate until you make a new pact with Ansitif. Note that most good- or lawful-aligned deities would require a worshiper to undergo *atonement* after daring to bind this vestige.

Astaroth

Astaroth, also known as Diabolus, has a deep and abiding hatred of devils, granting the ability to pass among fiends, bypass their diabolic defenses, and burn with the Abyssal version of hellfire.

Legend: This once-powerful demon lord with a gift for prophecy offered to fight alongside the Queen of Chaos during her war with the Wind Dukes of Aaqa, but was rejected. In the early days of the Blood War, Astaroth earned the name Diabolus by infiltrating the legions of Baator and rising to the rank of Treasurer of Hell. His true nature was eventually exposed by the arch-devil Gargauth, forcing Astaroth to flee the wrath of Asmodeus, but his spying caused incalculable harm to the devils' war effort and prevented the legions of hell from winning a clear and decisive victory against the hordes of the abyss.

Upon his return to the Abyss, Astaroth retreated to a steam-filled layer filled with floating chunks of burning stone. In preparation for the inevitable retaliation of the Lords of Nine, Astaroth began cultivating mortal cults on countless worlds through the use of his prophetic powers, in hopes of transforming himself into a god. He must have succeeded in some fashion, although not enough to forestall his fate. Astaroth was eventually slain by Gargauth, at the command of Asmodeus. In addition to claiming his predecessor's name, the Tenth Lord of Nine is said to have seized the mantle of divinity from Astorath as well.

Special Requirement: Astaroth requires that his seal be drawn on an area of stone that has recently been burned and then doused with cold water.

Manifestation: Astorath's misty form rises up from his seal like a cloud of steam, slowly condensing into the form of a handsome human with draconic and feathered wings. His serpentine tongue flicks nervously as his body is slowly consumed with hellfire.

Sign: You acquire the stench of brimstone and a cloudy film covers your eyes.

Influence: Astaroth's influence gives you a vague but continuous sense of impending doom that makes you morose and fatalistic. Because Astaroth desires revenge on the devils who brought him low, he requires that you attack a devil in preference to all others whenever you are in combat and that you initiate combat with any devil you meet.

Granted Abilities: Astaroth grants you the power to see the future, to burn with the flames of the Abyss, to pass among fiends, and to strike creatures with protection from nonsilver weapons (including many devils).

Blackflame: Your spells, spell-like abilities, and magic item abilities with the fire descriptor deal half fire damage and half vile damage. You can cast *fireball*, as per the spell, three times per day (caster level equals your effective binder level).

Divination: You can perform a *divination*, as per the spell (caster level equals your effective binder level).

Serpentine Tongue: You gain a bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks equal to your binder level. You gain an additional +4 bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks when dealing with evil outsiders.

Silvered Touch: Any natural attack or attack with a metal weapon you make is treated as if it were a silver weapon. These attacks do not apply a –1 penalty on damage rolls.

Cabiri the Watching Master

One of the oldest obyriths in existence, Cabiri, the Watching Master, grants his summoners the ability to see in darkness or twilight, to observe others from afar, and to uncover potential foes.

Legend: In ages past, when obyriths lorded the Abyss, the many-eyed tyrant known as Cabiri ruled a large swath of the layer now known as Pazunia, warring against rival lords

such as Bechard, Pazuzu, and Ubothar. The Watching Master kept careful eyes on his rivals but spent most of his energy scrying the relatively unknown deeper levels of the Abyss. Some record of Cabiri's observations must have survived in the ruins of his long-abandoned keep, for the Fraternity of Order began its effort to catalog the layers of the Abyss following its exploration of the Watching Master's ruined stronghold.

When the Queen of Chaos called the obyriths to war against the Wind Dukes of Aaqa, she turned to Cabiri for advice many times, drawing upon his ability to divine futures by utilizing resources in the depths of the Abyss unguessed at by most his kin. Near the end of the war, Cabiri foresaw the Queen's defeat, and fled the field of battle. This act may have ironically been the one that most crippled the Queen's forces and allowed for her subsequent defeat. Cabiri fled to the depths of the Abyss and hid there for eons while he watched the obyriths suffer the humiliating defeat upon the Fields of Pesh, and the subsequent eladrin invasions that finished off so many of the survivors.

As Cabiri explored the depths of the Abyss, it is believed that he discovered some of the truth behind the creation of the obyrith race, a discovery that compelled him to resurface and seek out the obscure fiends known as the baernoloths. Whatever he confronted them with was enough for them to engineer his capture and subsequent imprisonment in the then-still-young Wells of Darkness. Yugoloths often visit Cabiri's well, more often than any other well in the layer, which suggests that his imprisonment remains of interest to these neutral evil fiends.

Special Requirement: Cabiri requires that his seal be drawn with blood, outside at night or during a solar eclipse.

Manifestation: One or more lights or areas of darkness in the sky above—the stars, the moon, or the solar eclipse—suddenly open, revealing a watching eye behind the lid of light. Under its baleful gaze, Cabiri's seal begins to dissolve into a puddle of blood. The puddle suddenly blinks, transforming the pooled blood into a ring of tiny eyes surrounding a single mouth that speaks with the sonorous voice of lost and distant souls.

Sign: An additional eye appears on your forehead, equidistant from your other eyes.

Influence: Cabiri hungers to see everything, no matter how horrifying or entrancing. You receive a +4 insight bonus on Will saves versus figments but suffer a –4 penalty on Will saves versus patterns. You are not able to avert or close your eyes when confronted by a creature with a gaze attack.

Granted Abilities: Cabiri grants you his ability to observe others from afar, to perceive threats, and to see unhindered in conditions of twilight or darkness.

Arcane Eye: You can create an invisible magical sensor at will, as though you had cast *arcane eye* (caster level equals your effective binder level). You can never create more than one arcane eye at a time, and you can dismiss or renew the effect as a standard action. Once you have used this ability, you cannot use it again for 5 rounds.

Far-seeing Gaze: Your spells and spell-like abilities of the scrying subschool gain a +10 bonus to their save DCs.

Seer in Darkness: You gain darkvision to 60 feet and low-light vision. If you already have darkvision, add 60 feet to the range.

Visions of Terror: You can share your terrible knowledge of existence with others. You can cast *phantasmal killer*, as per the spell, three times per day (caster level equals your effective binder level).

Demonic Harlots

Among the ranks of demonkind, there are those who become accustomed to being summoned by mortals and bribed into servitude. Over time, such demons become well known to arcane spellcasters, with their price, tastes, and skills recorded in many tomes. Among their fellow demons, such frequently bound demons are known as "harlots," for their willingness to exchange services for rewards at a "regular rate" is considered demeaning. Several well-known demonic harlots are listed here.

Arach-tinor: This predatory bebilith is a superb bounty hunter (14 HD advanced bebilith scout 4). He delights in devouring half-fiends, tieflings, and creatures with the Abyssal Heritor feat. His service requirement is the sacrifice of one such unwilling, Abyss-tainted creature (i.e., no benefit for willing, good-aligned, or good subtype sacrifices). Arach-tinor expects to be tasked to hunt down a creature in the Abyss. If given such a task, the caster receives a +8 bonus to convince Arach-tinor to provide the service.

Keldara'Mor: This ancient mature nabassu has long served mortals as a killer for hire (15 HD advanced nabassu assassin 3) and he refuses any task that does not require him to perform an assassination. The nabassu refuses service if the spell is not cast in a *descecrated* or *unhallowed* area (i.e., no benefit for such casting circumstances). Keldar'Mor is relatively uninterested in wealth offerings (half the normal bonus) but is very interested in sacrifices killed, transformed into undead, and given to him (twice the normal bonus).

Saturnach: This mercenary bulezau is a trained bodyguard (10 HD advanced bulezau fighter 2) with a passion for magic weapons. He values magic weapons at twice their normal value and other items

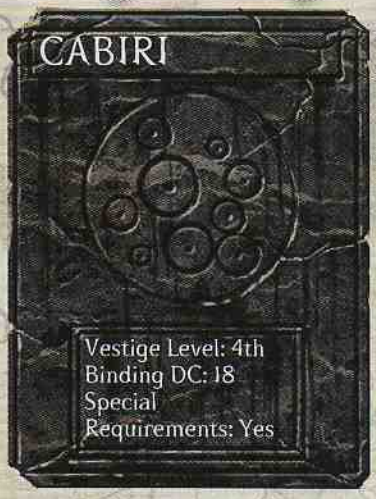
at half their normal value. Saturnach expects to be tasked to serve as a bodyguard for at least 24 hours. If given such a task, there is no penalty for length of service.

Zygothia: This scrawny little quasit is a skilled wizard (3 HD quasit wizard 3) who serves as an arcane spell broker. He values spellbooks and arcane scrolls at twice their normal value and other items at half their normal value. Zygothia expects to be tasked to acquire a specific spell by trading with other spellcasters in the Abyss. In addition to his normal fee, he requires a spell of the same level and school as the spell to be acquired (either in scroll form or in a spellbook), which is given in trade to the other party in the negotiation. If given such a task, the quasit expects the wealth offering to be equal to 100 gp per level of the requested spell. Zygothia is very reliable (for a demon) and always returns the borrowed spellbook upon completion of the task, as it is good for business.

What Do You Know: The Abyss

The Abyss is a place of chaos and evil, home to countless hordes of demons. The Fraternity of Order has cataloged more than 600 layers of the Abyss, but the total number of layers is said to be nigh-infinite. Any sage with a passing knowledge of the Lower Planes can share some general observations on the nature of the Abyss, some of which are correct and some of which are little more than fearful speculation.

- There are said to be three main races of demons: ancient, alien obyriths; legions of tanar'ri born from debased souls of dead mortals; and ghostlike loumaras who have emerged from the Dreaming Gulf.
- In the Age before Ages, an obyrith lord named the Queen of Chaos led the demons of the Abyss to war against the Wind Dukes of Aaqa. Her defeat precipitated the fall of the obyriths and the rise of the tanar'ri as rulers of the Abyss. Now the tanar'ri are engaged in a never-ending conflict with the diabolic denizens of the Nine Hells known as the Blood War.
- The first layer of the Abyss is Pazunia, the Plain of Infinite Portals. The Pits of Pazunia are portals, each leading to a deeper layer of the Abyss. Pazunia is also home to some of the more hospitable locations in the Abyss, including the towns of Broken Reach and Styros.
- The lower layers of the Abyss are often, but not always, ruled by a unique demon lord. Some of the most famous demon lords include Demogorgon, Prince of Demons; Graz'zt, the Dark Prince; Malcanthet, Queen of the Succubi; and Orcus, Prince of the Undead.
- It is possible to enter the Abyss by way of a portal, through the use of spells, such as *astral projection*, *gate*, or *plane shift*, or through the use of a magic item, such as an *amulet of the planes*. It is also possible to employ *planar ally*, *planar binding*, or *summon monster* spells to acquire the services of an outsider capable of employing *plane shift* to transport you there.
- In addition to Pazunia's portals, it is possible to move from layer to layer of the Abyss by a variety of other means. If they possess a forked metal rod aligned to a particular layer (sometimes sold in the markets of Pazunia), spellcasters can also use *plane shift* to move from the current layer to the layer aligned with the rod. Ships sailing on the Abyssian Ocean can reach the mighty seas and oceans found on some layers. The Infinite Staircase linking the various outer planes touches the Abyss in several locations, usually in cities frequented by mortal or demonic artists and performers. The River Styx winds through Pazunia, where it splits into several tributaries that lead to the deeper layers of the Abyss. Numerous other ways to traverse the Abyss doubtlessly exist, though such routes might prove incredibly perilous to moral souls.
- Dealing with demons is an enterprise frought with peril, but certain spells and magic items give their casters a measure of control over the inhabitants of the Abyss. Demons can be summoned by means of various *summon monster* spells and can be called by means of various *planar ally*, *planar binding*, and *gate* spells, but practitioners are advised to prepare *magic circles against evil* and similar protective spells in advance. Demons can be contacted by means of *contact other plane* and can be bound by spells such as *binding* and *trap the soul* and magic items such as an *iron flask*. The passage of demons to and from the Abyss can be forced or blocked by means of spells such as *banishment*, *dimensional lock*, and *forbiddance*. Finally, demons can be forced into service through the use of truename magic (detailed in *Tome of Magic*).
- Legendary sources of information about the Abyss and its inhabitants include the *Black Scrolls of Ahm* and the *Demonomicon of Iggwilv*.



Volo's Guide
Renegades of Darkhold

"Well met again, gentlefolk! Volothamp Geddarm, at thy service once more!

"Yes, 'tis I, the notorious Volo, this time with some wise warnings about two deadly and capable wizards who for many long years were behind much of the fell work of the Zhentarim across the Heartlands of Faerûn.

"An enigmatic couple, these two, who kept to the shadows when needful and struck boldly and ruthlessly when force would be most effective. Lovers who have both tasted and been the worst of evil, but have now moved on. Two to watch—and more than that: two we should all have been watching more closely years ago!

"Save what is written here, and both read and heed these words well. For if ever you should meet with either of these two, it will be too late to read and learn. You must know the worst now. Or else."

Volo

FORGOTTEN REALMS

by George Krashos, with special introduction by Ed Greenwood
illustrated by Julie Dillon

SEMEMMON

Born Malathar Wingstarl in the Year of the Full Flagon (1234 DR) in the Sembian city of Huddagh, Sememmon enjoyed a life of privilege. The Wingstarls were a well-regarded family of merchants and builders who still ply their trade in and around the Inner Sea. The family made its money and reputation by building the finest temples in the Dalelands and around the Moonsea in the 13th century of Dalereckoning.

Malathar's father thought to harness his son's intellectual talents by sending him to study with the priesthood of Waukeen in Ordulin. While Malathar discovered no deep-seated faith for the Merchant's Friend, his keen intelligence and excellent memory soon saw him assisting with the family's business affairs. While there, Malathar met Gelvar Thordrunn, a dealer in curios and esoterica of the magical kind, who encouraged the youth's interest in magic and took him on as an apprentice. While Malathar learned much under the wizard's tutelage, Gelvar went missing after a shipwreck some two winters later.

His studies interrupted, Malathar was asked to do business for his family in Zhentil Keep. At that time, there was great upheaval in Zhentil Keep with the slaying of Lords Harlshoon and Calkontor by Ulsan Baneservant. During this period, a desperate Manshoon called upon the Toroth noble family to safeguard him while he sought to avenge his father's death.

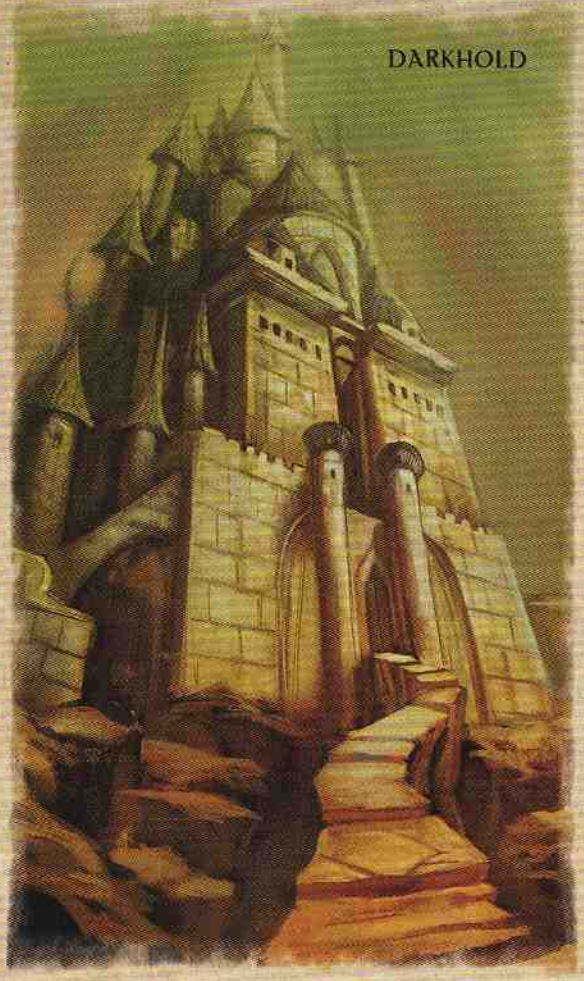
Coincidentally, it was with this noble family that the Wingstarls sought to do business. Within days of Malathar's arrival in the city, he was dragging Manshoon's unconscious body from the smoking ruin of a Toroth villa destroyed by wizard-assassins. Considering the wizard indebted to him, Malathar requested that Manshoon tutor him in the Art and accept his service. Seeing potential in the opportunistic student, the dark-minded wizard agreed.

Years later, with Manshoon's ascension to Zhentil Keep's Council of Lords, Malathar faked his death to distance his family from Manshoon's enemies and his growing political rivalries. He took the name of Sememmon after one of his grandfather's manservants, now long dead. With the secret formation of the Zhentarim in 1261 DR, Sememmon became one of a number of magelings directly under the supervision of Manshoon, all eagerly vying for his favor. In 1266 DR he betrayed his fellow apprentice and chief rival Alvagaerus Firlthond and became "first among equals" in Manshoon's service. He also began to vie in earnest with Fzoul Chembryl for power in the Zhentarim hierarchy, sparking an animosity that continues to this day.

Sememmon spent the next several decades as Manshoon's chief apprentice and agent, routinely being tasked with the most hazardous and sensitive Zhentarim missions. After the conquest of Darkhold in 1312 DR, Sememmon was entrusted with this key command

and elevated to the Inner Circle of the Zhentarim alongside Manshoon and Fzoul Chembryl.

In 1346 DR, Sememmon met a new Zhentarim recruit, a human wizard named Ashemmi. It took even the canny Sememmon several winters to deduce that Ashemmi was a female elf using her wizardry to appear as a human male, but he chose not to confront her, admiring her daring and attempted subterfuge. Attracted to Ashemmi physically, he did not foresee that she would unveil her true identity and honestly declare her love for him in 1355 DR. Their passion for each other was swiftly kindled but soon imperiled when Ashemmi revealed that she was also a Harper agent with orders to infiltrate the Zhentarim. While shocked and disturbed by this revelation, Sememmon realized that he loved her and could not betray her.


DARKHOLD

Fearing discovery, Sememmon worked to cover Ashemmi's tracks and began to divert funds and magics into personal boltholes and safehouses under his original name in a number of towns and hamlets across the North and Sword Coast. He knew he played a dangerous game with Manshoon and the Zhentarim and prepared for its inevitable conclusion.

In the Year of the Prince (1357 DR), the Zhentarim discovered Harper spies within their ranks and Manshoon uncovered Sememmon and Ashemmi's treachery. In the ensuing confrontation, Sememmon died at Manshoon's hands while trying to defend Ashemmi. Returned to life as a clone, he discovered Ashemmi's emotions locked away by Manshoon's magic. Feigning desperate obsequiousness, he convinced Manshoon and Fzoul that he was once again a ruthless and willing participant in Zhentarim schemes. In reality, however, Sememmon sought only to escape the Black Network.

Despite being magically estranged from Ashemmi, Sememmon found his love for her had not diminished. As the years passed, they gradually reconnected, worked to tear down the walls of Manshoon's magic, and became lovers once again. During this time, Sememmon looked constantly for his opportunity to escape the shadow of Manshoon. The Manshoon Wars—wherein Manshoon's numerous clones activated at once and vied for legitimacy—and the rise of Fzoul prompted Sememmon to make his escape, and he was surprised to find that Ashemmi would not be parted from him. They fled Darkhold soon after Midwinter of the Year of Wild Magic (1372 DR) and escaped with the unexpected aid of Moonstar agents sent by the prescient Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun. Grasping the lifeline thrown to them by the Blackstaff, Sememmon and Ashemmi became his secret cohorts and began undertaking missions on his behalf.

Over the next two winters, Sememmon and Ashemmi undertook several daring and successful missions for the Moonstars. Their deeds and loyalty saw them both participate in the events of the Feast of the Moon in the Year of the Lightning Storms (1374 DR) where Khelben sacrificed his life to restore a city of lost Miyeritar.

Despite the sanctuary and companionship offered by Khelben's agents, Sememmon refuses to rest. He knows that the flesh of his body exists only due to the magecraft of Manshoon and fears that his former master has a hitherto unrevealed way of finding or taking control of him. Given this danger, Semmemon has elected to travel the hidden paths and trails of Faerûn, ever with Ashemmi by his side.

personality

Ruthless and implacable, Sememmon enjoys countering the efforts and activities of his enemies—especially the Zhentarim—through unwitting dupes or idealistic heroes. He often approaches groups of adventurers in disguise, requesting they undertake tasks to divert his foes from his own activities and brewing counterattacks. Despite his cold attitude, he is steadfast and true to his word. He never abandons those in his indirect employ unless his own or Ashemmi's safety is compromised.

SEMEMMON **CR 19**

Male Chondathan wizard 19
LN Medium humanoid (human)
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +9, Spot +9
Languages Abyssal, Chondathan, Common, Draconic, Elven

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 23
hp 54 (19 HD); regeneration from ring
Immune poison
Fort +10, **Ref** +12, **Will** +20

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee *dagger of venom* +9/+4 (1d4/19–20 plus poison)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +8
Combat Gear *blast globes*, wand of fireball* (10th; 25 charges)
Spells Prepared (CL 19th; +11 ranged touch)
9th–*meteor swarm* (DC 28), *power word kill, time stop, wish*
8th–*polar ray* (+11 ranged touch)**, *power word stun*, quickened *shout* (DC 27), *mind blank*
7th–*delayed blast fireball* (DC 26), *energy immunity**, power word blind, prismatic spray* (DC 26), *spell turning*
6th–*chain lightning* (DC 25), *disintegrate* (DC 24), *greater dispel magic, mislead* (DC 24), *probe thoughts***
5th–*cone of cold* (DC 24), *dominate person* (DC 24), *lesser ironguard*, quickened *expeditious retreat, teleport* (DC 23), *wall of force*
4th–*charm monster* (DC 23), *ice storm, lesser globe of invulnerability*, maximized *magic missile, stoneskin, thunderlance***
3rd–*dragonskin**, fly, heroism, lightning bolt* (DC 22), *nondetection, slow* (DC 21)
2nd–*combust**, darkness, flaming sphere* (DC 21), *fox's cunning, invisibility, scorching ray*
1st–*charm person* (DC 20), *disguise self, magic missile, shield, true strike, unseen servant*
0–*acid splash, detect magic, message, read magic*
* From *Magic Item Compendium*
** From *Spell Compendium*

Abilities Str 9, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 26, Wis 18, Cha 18
SQ enhanced wisdom and charisma
Feats Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Leadership (23), Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silver Palm***, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration, Spellcasting Prodigy***, Sudden Maximize**
Skills Appraise +12 (+14 for alchemical items), Bluff +14, Concentration +21 (+25 when casting defensively), Craft (alchemy) +10, Diplomacy +15, Gather Information +12, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +12, Knowledge (religion) +10, Listen +9, Ride +4, Search +12, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +29, Spot +9
Possessions combat gear plus *dagger of venom*, 3 mwk cold iron daggers, *bracers of armor +8, ring of protection +5, ring of regeneration, hood of intellect +6, periapt of proof against poison, vest of resistance +4*, war wizard cloak**
Spellbook Sememmon has access to all spells of 1st through 5th level, and many of the spells of 6th through 9th level, including all enchantment spells
* From *Magic Item Compendium*
** From *Complete Arcane*
*** From *Player's Guide to Faerûn*

Enhanced Wisdom and Charisma: Sememmon has improved both his Wisdom and Charisma scores through the use of *wish* spells and now has a +4 inherent bonus to these attributes.

ASHEMMI

Ashemmi has been described as both a gold elf and a moon elf and is in fact a child of both. She was born Shemmithil Maraphiir to her moon elf father, Rhyem Maraphiir and her gold elf mother, Chelryn Sarynnryllar in Silverymoon during the Year of the Dark Masks (1171 DR). Her parents traveled from the environs of Silverymoon to live among the wood elves of the Neverwinter Woods shortly after she was born and were taken in by elves of the Ilbaereth clan. Ashemmi led a sheltered life for much of her first 80 winters until her older brother Malphys discovered her talent for the Art. Malphys had apprenticed with Khelben Arunsun and taught his younger sister the rudiments of magic. This nurturing of Ashemmi's magical talent awakened in her a yearning for adventure.

In the Year of Bright Dreams (1261 DR), Ashemmi stole away from her home and traveled to Neverwinter, where she fell in with a band of adventurers known as the Bright Banner Brandished. This band survived five perilous seasons of adventuring before falling afoul of the necromancer Orvanath. Trapped in a series of underground crypts in the wilds north of Mirabar, the company was overwhelmed by wraiths under Orvanath's control. Ashemmi survived only by using a scroll of *teleport* to escape after her comrades had all been slain. It was an experience that tempered her lust for adventure and also saw her swear vengeance against

Orvanath, now a lich and member of the Arcane Brotherhood in Luskan.

Ashemmi spent several decades wandering the North, operating as an arcane tutor and mage-for-hire in Silverymoon. It was at this time that she first came to the attention of Khelben Arunsun, who had the moon-elf bard and Harper, Elthaor, come to her for tutelage in the Year of the Singing Skull (1297 DR). The pair fell in love and Ashemmi was recruited to the Harpers and sent with Elthaor to the Dalelands. There they did the bidding of the Master Harper Halithurn Emmercastle of Daerlun (one of the guises of a roving Elminster) and they traveled greatly around the lands of the Inner Sea. In 1339 DR, Elthaor was slain by drow slavers outside Calaunt and a grief-stricken Ashemmi was ordered to Waterdeep by Khelben.

On her arrival, Ashemmi was asked by Khelben to become a deep-cover agent for the Harpers in Darkhold. Uncaring for her personal safety due to the death of Elthaor, Ashemmi accepted and joined the Zhentarim in 1344 DR. It is likely Manshoon knew of her deception from the very start, at least in terms of her race and gender, but it amused him to allow Ashemmi her place in the Zhentarim. After a few years at Darkhold, Ashemmi found herself falling in love with the wizard Sememmon. His quiet strength reminded her of Elthaor, and she soon discovered that much of the ruthlessness and stolid coldness he exhibited was designed to maintain a facade of strength and control. After her unmasking and the death of Sememmon, Ashemmi submitted to Manshoon's spells in order to bring back her love as a clone.

Manshoon's magic caused Ashemmi to struggle with her feelings and thoughts. Her memories had not been erased and she clearly remembered her previous thoughts and emotions, but found them swamped by a tide of hate, bitterness, and recrimination. Following her estrangement from Sememmon, she seduced Dag Zoreth in late 1359 DR to fill the void in her soul. Their union conceived a child, who was spirited away by Dag Zoreth at Ashemmi's request, for the birth had opened her eyes to the shame and indignity she had endured at the hands of the Zhentarim. She vowed she would have her revenge on the Black Network and put out feelers to Khelben Arunsun through unwitting intermediaries seeking sanctuary.

After her escape with Sememmon and time serving the Moonstars, Ashemmi's participation in Khelben's Cleansing Ritual shattered Manshoon's bindings and she was restored to her former self. Since that joyful day, Ashemmi has reaffirmed her love for Sememmon, who has also turned his back on the blackness that once dwelt in his soul. She has made contact with her daughter Cara, who now resides in Waterdeep and although she has many regrets, she knows that she has been given the opportunity to make amends for her past evil deeds.

personality

Ashemmi has an incredible resentment toward the Zhentarim and Manshoon in particular, and she does anything in her power to disrupt their activities and enterprises. She is known to hire adventurers on a regular basis to raid Zhentarim-backed caravans in the Delimbiyr Vale and has broadened her focus to oppose the activities of the Church of Cyric in recent times as well.

ASHEMMI **CR 13**

Female moon elf wizard 13
CG Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Common, Elven, Illuskan, Orc

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20
hp 50 (13 HD)
Immune sleep
Fort +9 **Ref** +9, **Will** +11; +2 against enchantments

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk cold iron dagger +6/+1 (1d4/19–20)
Ranged mwk cold iron dagger +9 (1d4/19–20)
Base Attack +6; **Grp** +6
Combat Gear *wand of magic missile* (5th level; 30 charges), *wand of invisibility* (3rd level; 8 charges), *wand of lightning bolt* (10th level; 15 charges), *wand of sound lance** (10th level; 22 charges)
Spells Prepared (CL 13th; +9 ranged touch):
7th—*spell turning*
6th—*chain lightning* (DC 21), *greater dispel magic*
5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 20), *duelward**, *extended greater invisibility*, *teleport*
4th—*confusion* (DC 19), *force missiles**, *stoneskin*, *vortex of teeth**, *wall of fire*
3rd—*acid breath** (DC 18), *dispel magic*, *fly*, *hold person* (DC 18), *rainbow blast** (DC 18)
2nd—*blur*, *distracting ray**, *mirror image*, *protection from arrows*, *scorching ray*
1st—*disguise self*, *distract** (DC 16), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*
0—*detect magic*, *message*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*
* From *Spell Compendium*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 20, Wis 12, Cha 18
SQ elf traits, enhanced charisma
Feats Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Mind Over Body*, Scribe Scroll
Skills Bluff +9, Concentration +17 (+21 when casting defensively), Diplomacy +12, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Ride +4, Search +6, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +22, Spot +3
Possessions combat gear plus 3 mwk cold iron daggers, *bracers of armor +6*, *ring of protection +3*, *boots of elvenkind*, *brooch of shielding*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *diadem of intellect +2*, *ring of greater counterspells (lightning bolt)***
Spellbook Ashemmi has access to all spells of 1st through 5th level and a wide range of the spells of 6th through 7th level.
* From *Player's Guide to Faerûn*
** From *Magic Item Compendium*

Enhanced Charisma Ashemmi has improved her Charisma score through the use of scrolls of *wish* and now has a +3 inherent bonus to this attribute.

EBERRON

DRAGONMARKS

SPELL SOVEREIGN

by Tim Hitchcock • introduction by Keith Baker • illustrated by James Zhang

Two centuries ago, a general would have scoffed at the idea of golem armies or flying ships. Today, both of these are part of everyday life. Magic is a living thing. An old proverb given new meaning by the Mourning.

Last night I dreamt of a fireball crawling across the silent battlefield, the sole living thing on a field of corpses. Is this the shape of things to come? Are these living spells limited to the Mournland, or are they the first signs of the next evolution of magic?

—Tasker, Excoriate of House Sivis

Deep within the clouded wastes of the Mournland, lipid remnants of arcane power form into semi-sentient beings called living spells. The strange and inexplicable process, which creates such terrifying results, stumps even the most esteemed sages of Morgrave University. Still, the mystery and power of the living spell draws the attentions of many spellcasters who would dare to dominate these rebellious magics.

Calling themselves spell sovereigns, these individuals actively summon living spells and bind them into servitude. While spell sovereigns have yet to unearth the secret of creating lasting living spells, they've mastered techniques for summoning, controlling, and modifying the creatures, even going so far as to incorporate them into magic items.

LIVING SPELLS

The living spell template appears on page 293 of the *Eberron Campaign Setting* and on page 91 of *Monster Manual III*. The template converts any arcane or divine spell effect (or in some cases, a group of spell effects) into a creature of the ooze type. The caster and spell levels determine the creature's characteristics.

SPELL SOVEREIGN

"Why cast a new spell when there's a perfectly good one right here?"

—Cualok of the Seven Shrouds

NPC spell sovereigns tend to work alone, imagining at every waking moment new and terrible ways of using the creatures they summon and control. The Mournland suits them well, as they favor remote locations where they can practice their art far from the suspicions and prying eyes of common folk.

BECOMING A SPELL SOVEREIGN

Of the arcane spellcasting classes, sorcerers, warlocks, and wizards are the most likely to gain levels in the spell sovereign prestige class. Multiclassed druids sometimes—although very rarely—become spell sovereigns as well, using the living spells they control in an attempt to mend the eternal wounds of the Mournland.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for the spell sovereign prestige class a character must first fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, Knowledge (dungeoneering) 4 ranks.

Feat: Improved Familiar.

Spells: Ability to cast at least three conjuration (summoning) spells, one of which must be at least 3rd level.

Special: Must have had direct contact with a living spell.

THE SPELL SOVEREIGN

HIT DIE: D4

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spellcasting
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Living spell familiar (1st), *create living spell*	—
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Rebuke living spells	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Enhance living spell (40 ft., +2 Str, +1 AC)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	*Imprison living spell*	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Enhance living spell (60 ft., +2 Str, +1 AC)	—
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Prolonged summoning	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Enhance living spell (80 ft., +4 Str, +2 AC)	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Multiple summoning	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Enhance living spell (100 ft., +6 Str, +3 AC)	—
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	*Awaken living spell*	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class

Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level): Concentration, Craft, Knowledge (all skills; taken individually), and Spellcraft.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the spell sovereign.

Spellcasting: At each level except 1st, 5th, and 9th, you gain new spells per day and an increase in caster level (and spells known, if applicable) as if you had also gained a level in an arcane spellcasting class to which you belonged before adding the prestige class level. You do not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If you had more than one arcane spellcasting class before becoming a spell sovereign, you must decide to which class to add each level for the purpose of determining spells per day, caster level, and spells known.

Living Spell Familiar: You can obtain a living spell as a familiar (see the following section). Doing so requires a 24-hour ceremony that uses up magical materials that cost 500 gp. You must dismiss any other familiar you have before beginning the ceremony.

As a 1st-level spell sovereign, you may summon a living spell created from a 1st-level spell. At 4th level, you may exchange your existing familiar for a living spell created from a 2nd-level spell. You do not need to perform the ceremony again. At 7th level, you may exchange your existing familiar for a living spell created from a 3rd-level spell. At 10th level, you may exchange your existing familiar for a living spell created from a 4th-level spell. You may choose from any spell of the appropriate level that can be made into a living spell (see the template for details).

Your living spell familiar improves as you gain levels, as shown on the chart on page 80.

***Create Living Spell* (Sp):** As a standard action, you can temporarily create a living spell using any single spell you can cast that qualifies for the living spell template. This ability expends the spell or spell slot. The living spell appears where you designate within 30 feet and acts immediately, on your turn. It attacks your opponents to the best of its ability.

You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to half your spell sovereign level. The created living spell lasts for a number of rounds equal to your spell sovereign level.

This ability otherwise functions as *summon monster*.

Rebuke Living Spells (Su): Beginning at 2nd level, you can rebuke, command, or bolster living spells as an evil cleric rebukes undead. For the purpose of determining the effects of your rebuke attempt your turning level equals your caster level. You may use these abilities a total number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

Enhance Living Spell (Su): Starting at 3rd level, you project a 40-foot-radius aura that you can activate or suppress as a free action. Living spells within your aura gain a +2 bonus to Strength and a +1 insight bonus to Armor Class.

At 5th level, and at every odd level after, the radius of your aura increases by +20 feet. In addition, at 7th level the bonuses you provide increase to +4 and +2, respectively. At 9th level, they increase again to +6 and +3, respectively.

Imprison Living Spell (Sp): As a 4th-level spell sovereign, you can imprison a living spell within a gem and store its energy for later use. In order to imprison a living spell you must touch it (as a melee touch attack) with a gem worth at least 300 gp × spell level × caster level of the living spell you wish to imprison. If you succeed in touching the living spell, it must immediately make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + your caster level) or be drawn into the gem.

Once you have a living spell imprisoned within a gem, the living spell creates a number of charges equal to its Hit Dice. You may expend a charge to create a spell-like effect identical to the living spell's base spell (at minimum caster level for the spell). Once you've used up all the charges within the gem in this way, the gem crumbles to dust, destroying it and the living spell imprisoned within.

Only you may use a living spell gem you create. Once a living spell is drawn into a gem with this ability it ceases to exist as a living spell. Destroying the gem when it still has charges left simply destroys the living spell. You cannot use this ability on a living spell created through your create living spell ability.

Prolonged Creation (Su): Beginning at 6th level, your *create living spell* ability lasts for 1 minute per spell sovereign level.

Multiple Creations (Su): At 8th level, you gain the ability to create a living spell composed of two different spells, as a standard action. The created living spell exists for 1 round per spell sovereign level before dissipating. This ability otherwise functions exactly like the *create living spell* ability.

***Awaken Living Spell* (Sp):** At 10th level you gain the spell-like ability to awaken a living spell. This spell-like ability functions like the *awaken* spell, except that it affects only living spells. When you use this spell-like ability, you must make a Will save (DC 10 + the living spell's current HD).

The awakened living spell is friendly toward you, but you have no special empathy or connection with it. An awakened living spell gets 3d6 Intelligence, +1d3 Charisma, and can speak one language you know, plus one additional language you know per point of Intelligence bonus (if any).

You may use this spell-like ability once per day, but every time you do you must expend 500 XP.

LIVING SPELL FAMILIARS

A living spell familiar is a normal living spell that gains new powers when summoned to service by a spell sovereign. It retains the appearance, Hit Dice, base attack bonus, and base save bonuses of the living spell it once was. Only a normal, unmodified living spell may become a familiar. Thus, you cannot use an awakened living spell as your familiar.

Your living spell familiar also grants special abilities to you. These special abilities apply only when you and your living spell familiar are within 1 mile of each other.

Levels of different classes that are entitled to familiars (such as hexblade, sorcerer, and wizard) stack for the purpose of determining any familiar abilities that depend on your level.

Living Spell Familiar Basics: Use the basic statistics for the living spell you choose as your familiar, but make the following changes:

Hit Dice: For the purpose of effects related to number of Hit Dice, use your character level or the familiar's normal HD total, whichever is higher.

Hit Points: Your familiar has one-half your total hit points (not including temporary hit points), rounded down, regardless of its actual Hit Dice.

Attacks: Use your base attack bonus, as calculated from all your classes. Use the living spell familiar's Dexterity or Strength modifier, whichever is greater, to get its melee attack bonus with natural weapons. Damage equals that of a normal living spell of its kind.

Saving Throws: For each saving throw, use either the familiar's base save bonus or yours (as calculated from all your classes), whichever is better. The familiar uses its own ability modifiers to saves and doesn't share any of the other bonuses you might have on saves (such as from magic items or feats).

Skills: For each skill in which either you or the living spell familiar has ranks, use either the normal skill ranks for a living spell of that kind or your skill ranks, whichever is better. Regardless of a living spell familiar's total skill modifiers, some skills (such as Craft) may remain beyond its ability to use.

Feats: A living spell familiar gains one feat plus one for every 3 Hit Dice it has.

Living Spell Familiar Ability Descriptions: The abilities given on the table are cumulative.

Deflection Bonus Adjustment: The number noted here is an improvement to your living spell familiar's existing deflection bonus.

Int: Your living spell familiar's Intelligence score.

Blind-Fight (Ex): While your living spell familiar is within 5 feet, you gain the Blind-Fight feat.

Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex save for half damage, a living spell familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful save and half damage even if the save fails.

Empathic Link (Su): You have an empathic link with your living spell familiar out to a distance of 1 mile. You cannot perceive information through your living spell familiar's senses. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated, but you have the same connection to an item or place that your familiar does.

Damage Reduction (Su): If your arcane spellcasting level is 8th or higher, your living spell familiar gains damage reduction 5/magic. This increases to 10/magic once your arcane spellcasting level is 14th or higher.

Spell Immunity (Ex): If your arcane spellcasting level is 10th or higher, you are automatically immune to the spell from which your living spell familiar formed, as the *spell immunity* spell.

Speak with Master (Ex): If your arcane spellcasting level is 12th or higher, you and your living spell familiar can communicate verbally as if using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

Spell Resistance (Ex): If your arcane spellcasting level is 14th or higher, your living spell familiar gains spell resistance equal to your arcane spellcasting level + 5.

Scry on Familiar (Sp): If your arcane spellcasting level is 16th or higher, you may scry on your living spell familiar (as if casting the *scrying* spell) once per day.

Caster Level	Deflection Adjustment	Int	Special
6th–7th	+1	6	Blind-Fight, improved evasion, empathic link
8th–9th	+2	7	Damage reduction 5/magic
10th–11th	+3	9	Spell immunity
12th–13th	+4	10	Speak with master
14th–15th	+5	11	Damage reduction 10/magic, spell resistance
16th–17th	+6	12	Scry on familiar
18th–19th	+7	13	—
20th	+8	14	—

 by Andy Collins • illustrated by Andrew Hou

OFFICIAL ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

This month, the Sage tackles a broad array of questions related to feats and skill tricks. Send your questions for the Sage to **askdnd@wizards.com.**

If a multiclassed caster (such as a cleric/wizard) takes Automatic Quicken Spell (*Epic Level Handbook*, 51), does it apply to spells from both classes? What if he can cast 9th-level spells in only one of the classes?

Yes. The feat (as well as Automatic Silent Spell and Automatic Still Spell) applies to all your spells, even if you can't cast 9th-level spells for all your spellcasting classes.

Does the competence bonus to Knowledge checks from the Collector of Stories skill trick (*Complete Scoundrel*, 85) apply to the dark knowledge class feature of the archivist (*Heroes of Horror*, 83), since that class feature deals with knowledge of a type of creature's powers or vulnerabilities?

No.

The skill trick only applies to a very specific use of your Knowledge skills: a trained check to determine a monster's special powers or vulnerabilities (as described on page 78 of the *Player's Handbook*). It doesn't apply to any other uses of the Knowledge skill, even very similar functions such as the archivist's dark knowledge.

Can I swap bonus damage dice from sudden strike to activate an ambush feat, such as Concussion Attack (*Complete Scoundrel*, 75)?

Yes.

Can a rogue spend sneak attack dice gained from an item, spell, feat, or other non-class-feature-effect to activate an ambush feat, such as Concussion Attack (*Complete Scoundrel*, 75)?

Yes.

The source of your extra dice of sneak attack damage doesn't matter; as long as you have enough dice to spend and leave at least one die of sneak attack damage, you can use the ambush feat normally.

Do the bonus skill tricks gained from the Freerunner feat (*Complete Scoundrel*, 77) count against my normal limit of tricks known?

Yes.

This feat (and others like it, such as Cool Head and Sweet Talker) grant you two skill tricks without expending the normal skill point cost (that's what "at no cost" means), but these skill tricks still count toward your normal limit of known tricks.

These feats also increase your limit of known tricks by +1, but that's an unrelated benefit.

If I take the Freerunner feat (*Complete Scoundrel*, 77) but I don't have room to add both of the bonus skill tricks it grants, what happens?

If the bonus tricks would put you over the normal limit of known skill tricks, you can't add the skill trick until your limit increases.

For example, imagine an 8th-level rogue who knows four skill tricks. Upon reaching 9th level, she selects Freerunner (which normally grants two bonus skill tricks), but her known trick limit is only five (four for her character level, plus one for the feat). She therefore gains only one bonus skill trick at 9th level, but when her limit increases at 10th level, she can learn the second bonus skill trick.

You can take advantage of the increased trick limit before adding the bonus tricks. For example, a rogue who already knows two skill tricks and takes Freerunner at 6th level could gain its full benefit (because her new skill trick limit is one-half her level plus 1, or four).

The description of the Improved Buckler Defense (*Complete Warrior*, 100) feat only mentions attacks with an off-hand weapon. Does the feat apply to attacks made with two-handed weapons as well?

Not according to a strict reading of the feat's description.

Does the feat Improved Turning have any effect on the feat Divine Spell Power (*Complete Divine*, 80)?

No.

Improved Turning applies only when you "turn or rebuke creatures" (*Player's Handbook*, 96). It doesn't apply to any other use of turn undead (or other turn/rebuke checks).

Does an elf fighter (or other character proficient with all martial weapons) and the Improved Weapon Familiarity feat (*Complete Warrior*, 101) count as

having Exotic Weapon Proficiency (elven thinblade) for the purpose of qualifying for the champion of Corellon Larethian prestige class (*Races of the Wild*, 113)?

Yes.

Being proficient with a weapon is the same thing as having the appropriate Weapon Proficiency feat.

Can I use Karmic Strike (*Complete Warrior*, 102) more than once per round against the same foe if he attacks me more than once?

Yes, as long as you have sufficient attacks of opportunity to do so.

Karmic Strike doesn't change the normal rules for attacks of opportunity (one per opponent per provoking action), it simply adds to the list of provoking actions.

For example, if you had the ability to make two attacks of opportunity per round, you could use Karmic Strike twice during the round (once apiece against two opponents attacking you or twice against the same opponent if he attacked you twice—once for each provoking action).

Or, if an enemy left a threatened square without making a 5-foot step, and then attacked you, you could make two attacks of opportunity against that foe (again, once for each provoking action).

The Mage Slayer feat (*Complete Arcane*, page 81) indicates that spellcasters "are aware that they cannot cast defensively while being threatened by a character with this feat." What exactly does this mean? In what sense would a caster be aware? How does the awareness change if the character with Mage Slayer is invisible?

How is anyone aware of anything? Is awareness itself simply an illusion created by the semi-random firings of neurons within our own brains? Or is something occurring that can't be captured by physical measurements or observations? Better philosophers than the Sage have pondered these questions, so unfortunately you won't find much help on that front here.

Ahem.

For the purposes of the game, the feat means exactly what it says: Any spellcaster threatened by a character with this feat immediately becomes aware (that is, gains the knowledge) that any Concentration check made to cast a spell defensively will automatically fail. The feat doesn't say anything about having to be aware of the attacker's presence, so it appears that the awareness occurs regardless of the attacker's visibility.

Of course, an invisible spellcaster would be unaffected by a character with this feat, since you don't threaten targets you can't see.

If Monkey Grip (*Complete Warrior*, 103) can be used to wield a weapon one size category larger without extra effort, can you instead wield a two-handed weapon of your size category with one hand?

Technically no—the feat specifically applies to weapons one size category larger than you.

Does the Natural Spell feat also apply when a lycanthrope is in its alternate form?

No.

The feat specifically states that it functions "while in wild shape." It doesn't say anything about applying if you use another means of changing your form.

Can someone with the Oversized Two-Weapon Fighting feat (*Complete Adventurer*, 111) still use the Power Attack feat when wielding a one-handed weapon in his off hand?

Yes.

The phrase "penalties for fighting with two weapons as if you were wielding a light weapon" refers only to the normal attack penalties applied for two-weapon fighting. This feat doesn't add drawbacks, it reduces the normal attack penalty.

Can I use Quick Reconnoiter (*Complete Adventurer*, page 112) to use the Spot the Weak Point skill trick (*Complete Scoundrel*, 89) as a free action?

No.

Quick Reconnoiter only allows you to make a Spot (or Listen) check as a free action for the normal purpose (i.e., actively looking or listening for something, as described in the *Player's Handbook*). You can't use Quick Reconnoiter to make a Spot or Listen check used for a different purpose, especially if that check would normally require a standard action or longer.

Can a changeling (*Eberron Campaign Setting*, 12) with the Racial Emulation feat (*Races of Eberron*, 110) take dragonmark feats as if he were a member of a dragonmarked race?

No.

Can a spirit shaman (*Complete Divine*, 14) benefit from the Spontaneous Healer feat (*Complete Divine*, 84)? What about a favored soul?

As long as you meet the prerequisites for the feat, you can benefit from it.

Even a bard can select and benefit from this feat, as it doesn't require a divine spellcaster.

If I have the Stormguard Warrior feat (*Tome of Battle*, 36), can I choose to use the combat rhythm tactical option for my attacks of opportunity? What about for trip attacks or other melee attacks that don't normally deal damage?

Yes and no.

The tactical option's description doesn't limit its effect only to attacks made on your turn, so it seems reasonable to say you can choose to use it for any normal melee attack you make.

A trip attack isn't a "normal" melee attack, however, so you can't gain the benefit both of the feat and of the trip attack simultaneously. Effectively, the feat grants you a new kind of special attack which can replace any normal melee attack (much like a trip or sunder attack can replace a normal melee attack).

Can I use the combat rhythm tactical option of the Stormguard Warrior feat (*Tome of Battle*, 36) at the same time that I use the cornered predator or talon shield tactical options of the Reaping Talons feat (*Tome of Battle*, 35)?

Yes.

The Stormguard Warrior feat allows you to replace a normal melee attack with a special touch attack. The Reaping talons feat simply states that you must hit your foe with two attacks, but any attack will do (even if it deals no damage).

If my character has Telling Blow (*Player's Handbook II*, 83) and an ambush feat (from *Complete Scoundrel*) and scores a critical hit, can he sacrifice the sneak attack damage from the critical hit to activate the ambush feat?

No.

You must declare your intent to use an ambush feat before making your attack roll, so it's only reasonable to conclude that you must also know that the attack will be a sneak attack (that is, that it will deal sneak attack damage).

Dragon

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 by Scott L. Gable • illustrated by James Zhang

DIRTY PRIESTS, HOLY THIEVES

Thanks to the involvement of such deities as Garl Glittergold and Olidammara, religious leaders need not oppose trickery and back-alley thieves need not avoid devotion. Clerics and other divine classes can create unique opportunities and unusual combinations of abilities when joined with rogue and other skill-based classes.

The following feats and skill tricks support combining the divine and the adventurous. Skill tricks first appeared in *Complete Scoundrel.*

FEATS

Spellcasters, as most divine standard classes are, suffer the most from multiclassing. The following feats attempt to alleviate the slowed spell progression by bolstering other elements of the classes.

ELEMENTAL STALKER

You have developed a potent technique that utilizes your control over the elements and your inner ki.

Prerequisites: *Ki* power, *sense elements.*

Benefit: Your shugenja and ninja levels stack for the purpose of determining the maximum radius and number of uses per day of your *sense elements* ability. For example, a 1st-level shugenja/4th-level ninja could use *sense elements* four times per day and up to a maximum of 25 feet.

Your shugenja and ninja levels also stack for the purpose of determining your AC bonus as well as the size of your *ki* pool. For example, a 4th-level shugenja/6th-level ninja gains a +2 bonus to her AC when unarmored and can use her *ki* powers a number of times per day equal to 5 (half the sum of her ninja and shugenja levels) + her Wisdom bonus (if any).

Special: If you use one of the elemental ninja variant class features (from DRAGON #354) the element chosen for your ninja class must match your shugenja element focus.

SACRED OUTLAW

Your devotion to your deity continues to grow, even when you choose to familiarize yourself with more worldly pursuits.

Prerequisites: Sneak attack +2d6, ability to turn or rebuke undead.

Benefit: Your cleric and rogue levels stack for the purpose of determining your turning check and turning damage. For example, a 3rd-level cleric/4th-level rogue turns or rebukes undead as a 7th-level cleric.

Your cleric and rogue levels also stack for the purpose of determining your sneak attack bonus damage. For example, a 3rd-level cleric/4th-level rogue deals +4d6 points of damage on a successful sneak attack.

SACRED PERFORMER

You invest a little bit of your piety into your every performance.

Prerequisites: Bardic music ability, ability to turn or rebuke undead.

Benefit: Your bard and cleric levels stack for the purpose of determining your turning check and turning damage. For example, a 4th-level bard/1st-level cleric turns or rebukes undead as a 5th-level cleric.

Your bard and cleric levels also stack for the purpose of determining

the number of times per day you can use your bardic music (although this does not affect which bardic music abilities you can use). For example, a 5th-level bard/4th-level cleric receives a bonus equal to 9 (the sum of his bard and cleric levels) + Intelligence bonus (if any) on his bardic knowledge checks, and he can use bardic music 9 times per day.

Swift Avenger

Your speed and knowledge of nature make you a potent and vicious predator.

Prerequisites: Nature sense, skirmish +1d6.

Benefit: Your druid and scout levels stack for the purpose of determining the extra damage and bonus to Armor Class when skirmishing. For example, a 4th-level druid/4th-level scout deals +2d6 points of damage and gains a +2 bonus to AC when skirmishing.

Your druid and scout levels also stack for the purpose of determining the number of times per day you can wild shape (but not for the size or type of creature available). For example, a 4th-level druid/4th-level scout can change form into a Small or Medium animal three times per day, but she does not gain the ability to take the shape of a Large animal.

Special: A scout can select Swift Avenger as one of her scout bonus feats (*Complete Adventurer*, 13).

Skill Tricks

Skill tricks come in four types: interaction skill tricks influence interpersonal relations between PCs and NPCs, manipulation skill tricks allow acts of legerdemain, mental skill tricks pit the mind and senses of the user against a target, and movement skill tricks typically involve the character physically moving from one location to another.

Learning a skill trick costs 2 skill points, which you can only expend when you acquire skill points. You can learn any skill trick as long as you meet the prerequisite. You cannot learn more than one skill trick at any given time, and your total number of skill tricks cannot exceed one-half your character level (rounded up). You can learn a skill trick only once; you either know it or you don't.

Unless otherwise noted, a skill trick can be performed only once per encounter (or once per minute, for scenes that don't involve combat or other conflict). Each skill trick's description specifies what sort of action, if any, is required to use it. A skill trick usually either requires a successful skill check to pull off or it "piggybacks" on a skill check you're already making. Exceptions to this general rule are noted in the skill trick descriptions.

Using a skill trick does not provoke attacks of opportunity unless its description specifically states that it does (or it involves an action that would normally provoke attacks of opportunity, such as moving out of a threatened square).

Critical Observation (Manipulation)

Your knowledge of anatomy lets you place blows to devastating effect.

Prerequisites: Heal 8 ranks, Improved Critical.

Benefit: You can make a Heal check (with a –10 penalty for making it quickly) in place of an attack roll to confirm a critical hit, using your opponent's AC as the check DC. You may only use this skill trick once per day.

Distracting Taunt (Interaction)

You can disrupt an opponent's spells with your taunts.

Prerequisites: Bluff 8 ranks, Spellcraft 8 ranks.

Benefit: As an attack of opportunity or readied action, you may attempt to disrupt a spellcaster as he casts a spell. You can make an opposed Bluff check to distract a spellcaster within 20 feet. If you succeed, your target must immediately make a Concentration check (DC 10 + your Bluff bonus + spell level) or lose the spell.

Ecstatic Fervor (Mental)

You can ignore pain when casting spells in combat.

Prerequisite: Concentration 8 ranks.

Benefit: If you take damage while casting or maintaining a spell, you apply only half the damage to the DC of the subsequent Concentration check required to continue the action. For continuous damage, you apply only one-quarter the total damage to the DC for 1 round.

Insightful Improvisation (Interaction)

You can tease out useful information by interacting with your audience.

Prerequisites: Diplomacy 2 ranks, Gather Information 5 ranks, Perform 5 ranks.

Benefits: You can make a Perform check in place of a Gather Information check. You take a –5 penalty on this check. You may only attempt this skill trick once per day.

Rhetorical Flourish (Interaction)

You can smooth over tense situations when under pressure.

Prerequisite: Diplomacy 8 ranks.

Benefit: You can perform a rushed Diplomacy check as a full-round action with only a –5 penalty on the check (instead of the normal –10).

Deities and Dirty Priests

Your DM has final say whether your multiclassed cleric can take the feats Sacred Outlaw or Sacred Performer, but the following provides a quick guide (listed by core, Eberron, and Forgotten Realms deities, respectively) to which deities might not mind.

Sacred Outlaw: Corellon Larethian, Garl Glittergold, Olidammara, and Yondalla; the Mockery, the Traveler; Beshaba, Cyric, Gargauth, Hoar, Mask.

Sacred Performer: Fharlanghn, Garl Glittergold, Olidammara, and Wee Jas; Olladra; Lliira, Milil, Oghma, Sharess, Sune.

by Rick Miller • illustrated by James Zhang

TRANSVERSED ARCANA

From arcane tomes of power and scrolls of long-hidden secrets to natural blessings of draconic blood or a demonic pact, hexblades, sorcerers, and wizards are the masters of arcane energies. Because magic itself allows for myriad possibilities, so too does it attract an endless stream of unique and unfettered practitioners.

While most arcane spellcasters appreciate the tradition and inherent utility of familiars, others see them as troublesome or otherwise undesirable. This article offers a few alternatives to the typical familiar, following the rules for variant class features detailed in *Player's Handbook II*.

ALIGNED SPELLCASTER

Your passions drive your magical abilities, imbuing your every spell with the power of your conviction. Those who oppose your ideals suffer the most from your magical energy.

Level: 1st (4th for hexblades).

Replaces: If you select this class feature you do not gain a familiar.

Benefit: Choose an alignment component you have that is not neutral. Spells you cast gain the appropriate alignment descriptor unless they already have the opposite alignment descriptor. For example, a neutral good wizard who selects this ability (and who must choose good) casts all spells that aren't evil spells as good spells.

Spells you cast that target creatures of the opposite alignment are cast at +1 caster level (+2 if they have the opposite alignment as a subtype). Area of effect and other spells that affect such creatures without targeting them do not gain this bonus.

A neutral spellcaster gains no benefit from this ability.

BELEAGUERED SPELLCASTER

The most fragile of all archetypes, arcane spellcasters struggle to avoid taking damage as often as possible. As injuries accumulate your desperation causes your spells to become more effective.

Level: 1st (4th for hexblades).

Replaces: If you select this class feature you do not gain a familiar.

Benefit: Whenever you take an amount of damage equal to 3 times your spellcaster level from one attack, the next spell you cast is automatically maximized or extended (your choice) without increasing the spell level or casting time.

You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 1 + the spellcasting ability score modifier (of the class in which you took this alternative class feature).

DISCIPLE OF BOCCOB

A deeply loyal and pious student of Boccob the Uncaring, you know the secret to creating powerful magic items through your understanding of the Archmage of the Deities' teachings.

Level: 1st (4th for hexblades).

Replaces: If you select this class feature you do not gain a familiar.

Benefit: You qualify for item creation feats as a character 1 level higher. Magic items you create are crafted at +1 caster level. The item gains this bonus for free: You do not pay the extra cost associated with a higher caster level.

If you destroy a permanent magic item you lose all arcane spellcasting abilities for 1 day per caster level of the item.

EIDETIC SPELLCASTER

Unlike other wizards, you can see within your mind the intricate arcane symbols, words, and gestures that define your spells. Your photographic memory acts as your spellbook, inscribing the spells you know within your mind.

Level: 1st.

Replaces: If you select this class feature you do not gain a familiar or the Scribe Scroll bonus feat.

Benefit: You do not need a spellbook, either to record spells you know or to prepare known spells. You can learn spells normally, either through gaining levels in wizard or learning from other spellbooks, and you must pay all the normal costs for learning new spells (used instead in special incenses rather than inks), but you do not need to put them into a spellbook.

IMROMPTU METAMAGIC

Sorcerers typically seek to maximize their limited spell selection by utilizing metamagic feats. Other arcane spellcasters also adjust their spells with these feats in order to keep their enemies guessing or to find added flexibility for their lower-level spells. This ability allows you to spontaneously apply metamagic feats to your spells.

Level: 1st (4th for hexblades).

Replaces: If you select this class feature you do not gain a familiar.

Benefit: Each day, you may choose a metamagic feat you have. You can cast spells affected by that feat without increasing the spell level or casting time of the spells. You may not use any other metamagic feats that day. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 5 minus the level adjustment of the metamagic feat. (Thus, you may use Quicken Spell in this way once per day, while you could use Silent Spell four times per day.)

You may apply the metamagic feat spontaneously, as you cast the spell. If you prepare spells, you do not need to prepare the spells with the metamagic feat already applied.

Even though this ability does not increase the spell's level, you must be able to cast spells of the level the spell would be if you applied the metamagic feat normally. For example, a quickened *magic missile* would normally require a 5th-level spell slot. With this ability you may cast a quickened *magic missile* as a 1st-level spell, but you must still be able to cast 5th-level spells.

SCHOOL MASTERY

Some specialist wizards take their mastery to whole new levels. Occasionally, even sorcerers and other arcane spellcasters focus their attentions on one school over the others. Your expertise in a chosen school of magic is unparalleled.

Level: 1st (4th for hexblades).

Replaces: If you select this class feature you do not gain a familiar.

Benefit: Choose a school of magic. If you are already a specialist wizard, you may only choose the school in which you are specialized. You cast all spells from the chosen school at +1 caster level. In addition, you gain the following benefit, based on the school you select.

Abjuration: Any non-instantaneous, nonpermanent abjuration spell you cast on someone other than yourself that does not require concentration has double the duration. You cannot use this ability on any spell whose duration you affect in any other way, such as with the Extend Spell metamagic feat.

Conjuration: Each creature you conjure with any *summon* spell gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Dexterity and Wisdom for the duration of the spell that summoned it.

Divination: Whenever you cast a divination spell, you immediately gain a +2 insight bonus on Listen and Spot skill checks for 1 hour per level of the spell you cast (0-level spells grant the bonus for 30 minutes).

Enchantment: For 24 hours after an enchantment spell you cast expires, the target of your spell takes a –2 penalty on all Will saves made to resist your spells or spell-like abilities. You may affect only one creature at a time in this way. If your enchantment spell affected multiple targets, you must choose one creature against whom the penalty applies. Whenever an enchantment spell you cast expires while such a penalty is active, the old penalty immediately disappears.

Evocation: Whenever you cast an evocation spell that deals hit point damage, that spell deals +1 point of damage.

Illusion: Whenever you cast an illusion (shadow) spell that creates a partially real effect (such as *shadow conjuration* or *shadow evocation*), the effect is 10% more real than normal. Thus, a creature created by *shadow conjuration* is 30% as strong as a real creature of the same kind, instead of the normal 20%.

Necromancy: Each undead creature you create with any evil spell gains a number of temporary hit points equal to your caster level. These temporary hit points last indefinitely, only disappearing when your creation takes damage. They cannot be regained once lost.

Transmutation: Whenever you cast a spell that alters a creature's form, kind, or type, the DC to resist the spell increases by +1.

by Hal Maclean • illustrated by James Zhang

PLANT COMPANIONS

Druids and rangers both attune themselves to the rhythms of the natural world, connecting to the vast web of life and calling upon special assistants. While usually drawn from the ranks of the animal kingdom, a few connect more with plants instead. Pouring a tiny portion of their life force into saplings or brambles, they rouse those that sleep, giving plants mobility and a measure of free will.

A plant companion improves in much the same manner as an animal companion, using the table found on page 36 of the *Player's Handbook* when determining such things as bonus Hit Dice and natural Armor Class adjustment. All plant companions begin play using the following statistics. When using Handle Animal to get a plant companion to perform a trick, its master does not suffer the normal –5 penalty incurred when dealing with creatures of types other than animal.

BASE PLANT COMPANION **CR 1**

Always N Medium plant

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages none (understands master)

AC 13; touch 10, flat-footed 13 (+3 natural)

hp 9 (1 HD)

Immune mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, polymorph, stunning, critical hits, sneak attacks

Fort +4, **Ref** +0, **Will** +0

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee slam +1 (1d4+1)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +1

Abilities Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ plant traits

Feats Toughness

Skills Hide +1 (+5 in its natural terrain), Listen +1, Move Silently +1, Spot +1

NATURAL SELECTION

As you gain levels in druid or ranger, you can call upon more powerful animal companions whose abilities advance more slowly (see page 36 of the *Player's Handbook*). Instead of a more powerful plant companion, though, you gain the ability to evolve the one you have, endowing it with new abilities. This requires a ritual that lasts 24 hours. Each new ability has a delay in levels between

when you select it and when your plant companion gains it. You may select a new ability for your plant companion at any druid or ranger level in which a previously selected ability does not manifest. Your plant companion can only evolve one new ability at a time. For example, if at 1st level you choose to give your plant companion the bioluminescent ability, it gains that ability when you attain 2nd level. The most common plant companion special abilities follow.

Abilities marked with an asterisk may be taken more than once. Their bonuses or increases stack.

Alacrity (Ex) Your plant companion may, as part of a full attack action, make a bonus melee attack using its highest attack bonus. Your plant companion gains this ability after 2 levels.

Bioluminescent (Ex) Your plant companion glows in the dark, creating a nonmagical illumination equal to a torch. It may suppress or reactivate this light as a standard action. Your plant companion gains this ability after 1 level.

Blindsight (Ex) Your plant companion gains blindsight with a range of 30 feet. Your plant companion gains this ability after 2 levels.

Blunting Mold (Ex) Your plant companion develops a thick, cloying fungus along its length that automatically coats any slashing or piercing weapon that damages it. This mold causes the weapon to deal half damage on all attacks until its wielder spends 1 standard action wiping it off. Your plant companion gains this ability after 3 levels.

Bonus Feat (Ex) Your plant companion gains a bonus feat. It must meet all of the feat's prerequisites. Your plant companion gains this ability after 1 level.

Cactus Spurs (Ex) Your plant companion grows numerous wickedly sharp barbs along its length. Any creature that grapples it or attacks it with an unarmed strike or natural weapon takes 1d3 points of piercing damage. Your plant companion gains this ability after 1 level.

Darkvision (Ex) Your plant companion gains darkvision with a range of 60 feet. Your plant companion gains this ability after 1 level.

Distracting Pollen (Ex) Your plant companion may, as a standard action, emit a cloud of red dust in a 10-foot radius centered on itself. All creatures within the red dust have partial concealment, granting a 20% miss chance. This dust disperses after 1d4 rounds. Your plant companion can use this ability at will, but it must wait 5 rounds between each use. Your plant companion gains this ability after 2 levels.

Eldritch Fibers (Ex) Attacks your plant companion makes with its natural weapons are treated as magic for the purpose of overcoming damage resistance. Your plant companion gains this ability after 1 level.

Growth Spurt (Ex) Your plant companion increases to size Large. See page 291 of the *Monster Manual* for information about creatures that increase in size. You must select Powerful at least twice prior to taking Ironbark. Your plant companion gains this ability after 3 levels.

Ironbark (Ex) Your plant companion's natural armor increases by +3. You must select Powerful at least once prior to taking Ironbark. Your plant companion gains this ability after 2 levels.*

Mirrored Bark (Ex) Your plant companion develops a highly refractive surface, granting it a +2 bonus to Armor Class versus rays and a +2 bonus on Reflex saving throws made to resist spells or spell-like effects. Your plant companion gains this ability after 2 levels.*

Oakenbough (Ex) Your plant companion's Strength score and Constitution score increase by +2. Your plant companion gains this ability after 2 levels.*

Poisonous (Ex) All attacks by your plant companion deliver a mild poison (injury; DC 10 + half the plant's HD + the plant's Constitution modifier; Initial and secondary damage 1d3 Dex). Your plant companion gains this ability after 3 levels.

Powerful (Ex) Your plant companion gains +1 Hit Die. Your plant companion gains this ability after 1 level.*

Roots (Ex) Your plant companion gains fast healing 1. Your plant companion gains this ability after 3 levels.

Scent (Ex) Your plant companion gains the scent ability. Your plant companion gains this ability after 1 level.

Spines (Ex) Your plant companion can make ranged attacks (it can make as many ranged attacks in a round as it can normally make melee attacks) by firing tiny spines. It can either make melee attacks in a round or fire its spines; it cannot mix its attack types in a round. These spine attacks deal 1d3 points of piercing damage + half its Strength modifier, with a range increment 30 feet. Any additional effects that affect your plant companion's melee attacks (such as delivering poison) also affect its ranged attacks. Your plant companion gains this ability after 1 level.

Sticky Sap (Ex) Your plant oozes a strong adhesive that might trap any melee weapon that damages it. When such an attack hits, the wielder must immediately make an opposed Strength check against your plant companion (your plant companion gains a +4 racial bonus on this check). If your plant companion succeeds, the weapon becomes stuck. You can pull the weapon free as a move action, but any other creature (including the weapon's owner) must use a standard action (that provokes attacks of opportunity) and succeed at an opposed Strength check. If the attacker succeeds he can pull his weapon free. Your plant companion gains this ability after 5 levels.

Swift (Ex) Your plant companion's speed increases by 10 feet. Your plant companion gains this ability after 2 levels.*

Tendrils (Ex) Your plant companion's reach doubles. Your plant companion gains this ability after 2 levels.

Thorns (Ex) Your plant companion deals +1 point of damage with each attack and now deals only piercing damage. Your plant companion gains this ability after 1 level.*

Tremorsense (Ex) Your plant companion gains tremorsense with a range of 60 feet. Your plant companion gains this ability after 1 level.

*You may endow your plant companion with this ability multiple times. Its effects stack.

by Amber E. Scott • illustrated by James Zhang

MONK GUIDE

This guide employs charts, rules clarifications, suggestions, and rulebook references to enhance and ease the playability of the monk.

FLURRY OF BLOWS

A monk may strike with her flurry of blows when unarmed or using a special monk weapon. She must be unarmored to use her flurry of blows.

- A monk with one or more monk weapons in hand may substitute any or all her unarmed flurry of blows attacks with one of her monk weapons. Each end of a quarterstaff counts as a separate weapon for purposes of flurry of blows. Having a weapon in each hand (or holding a weapon two-handed) does not prevent a monk from using her unarmed strikes.
- A monk always applies her Strength bonus on damage rolls for all successful flurry attacks, whether she wields the weapon in one or both hands.
- A monk may use any special attack in any of her flurry of blows attacks, so long as the special attack requires use of a weapon. This includes trips, grapples, sunders, and disarms. She cannot bull rush or overrun as part of a flurry of blows.
- A creature that can make attacks with both natural weapons and manufactured weapons may use its flurry of blows ability in addition to its natural attacks, if the creature takes monk levels. It cannot use her natural weapons as part of the flurry, though.
- A monk can make a flurry of blows and an off-hand attack. Stack the penalties for two-weapon fighting with the penalties for the flurry of blows. The flurry attacks still receive the monk's full Strength bonus on damage rolls, but the off-hand attack receives only half her Strength bonus.
- The following special monk weapons can be used as part of a flurry of blows: kama, nunchaku, quarterstaff, sai, shuriken, siangham (*Player's Handbook*); lajatang (*Complete Warrior*); longstaff (*Complete Adventurer*).
- A monk may also consider a gauntlet as an unarmed strike and use one during her flurry of blows.
- When using shuriken in a flurry, a monk may combine Rapid Shot to gain an additional shuriken attack, but all her attacks (even ones made without shuriken) take an additional –2 penalty for using Rapid Shot.
- A shuriken is considered a light weapon for purposes of two-weapon fighting. A shuriken is also treated as ammunition for the purposes of drawing it, creating masterwork or magic versions of it, and what happens to it after it is thrown. A shuriken that hits its target is destroyed or rendered useless, while one that misses has a 50% chance of being destroyed or lost.
- A monk's unarmed strike is considered both a manufactured weapon and a natural weapon for purposes of spells and effects that enhance weapons (such as *magic fang* and *magic weapon*). This includes the Improved Natural Weapon feat in the *Monster Manual*.
- A monk's *ki* strike allows her to overcome damage reduction but doesn't confer any additional abilities, such

as the ability to strike incorporeal creatures. While a monk's unarmed strike can overcome the damage reduction of certain creatures, her unarmed strike is not a magic weapon.

FEATS AND PRESTIGE CLASSES

The following provide additional options to monks.

Feats: Acrobatic, Alertness, Athletic, Skill Focus, Stealthy (*Player's Handbook*); Ascetic Hunter, Ascetic Knight, Ascetic Mage, Ascetic Rogue, Leap Attack (*Complete Adventurer*); Ascetic Stalker (*Complete Scoundrel*); Extra Stunning, Fists of Iron, Flying Kick, Greater *Kiai* Shout, *Kiai* Shout, Rapid Stunning, Roundabout Kick, Weakening Touch, Zen Archery (*Complete Warrior*); Fiery Fist, Fiery *Ki* Defense, *Ki* Blast, Leap of the Heavens, Versatile Unarmed Strike, Water Splitting Stone (*Player's Handbook II*).

Prestige Classes: Thief-acrobat (*Complete Adventurer*); enlightened fist (*Complete Arcane*); sacred fist (*Complete Divine*); drunken master, tattooed monk (*Complete Warrior*).

ARMOR, ENCUMBRANCE, AND MONK ABILITIES

Ability	Armor Requirement	Encumbrance Requirement
AC Bonus	Unarmored	Unencumbered
Evasion	Cannot wear medium or heavy armor	None
Fast Movement	Unarmored	Unencumbered
Flurry of Blows	Unarmored	None
Improved Evasion	Cannot wear medium or heavy armor	None

JUMP DISTANCES AND MODIFIERS

DC	Task
Distance in feet	Long jump*
Distance in feet x4	High jump*
10	Hop up
15	Jump down

*Requires a 20 foot running start. With no running start, the DC doubles.

Modifier	Reason
+2	5 or more ranks in Tumble

TUMBLE CHECKS AND MODIFIERS

DC	Task
15+	Treat a fall as if it were 10 feet shorter when determining damage. Reduce the distance by 10 feet for every 15 points of your Tumble check
35	Stand from prone as a free action*

*Still provokes an attack of opportunity.

Modifiers	Reason
–10	Tumble at full speed instead of half your speed
–20	Tumble while running
+2	5 or more ranks in Jump

FLURRY OF BLOWS PROGRESSION

Level	Flurry of Blows Attack Bonus
1st	–2/–2
2nd	–1/–1
3rd	+0/+0
4th	+1/+1
5th	+2/+2
6th	+3/+3
7th	+4/+4
8th	+5/+5/+0
9th	+6/+6/+1
10th	+7/+7/+2
11th	+8/+8/+8/+3
12th	+9/+9/+9/+4
13th	+9/+9/+9/+4
14th	+10/+10/+10/+5
15th	+11/+11/+11/+6/+1
16th	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2
17th	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2
18th	+13/+13/+13/+8/+3
19th	+14/+14/+14/+9/+4
20th	+15/+15/+15/+10/+5

CLIMB MODIFIERS

Modifier	Reason
–5	Move half your speed instead of one-quarter your speed
–5	Climb a corner where you can brace against perpendicular walls
–10	Climb a location where you can brace against two opposite walls
–20	Move your full speed instead of one-quarter your speed
–20	Retain your Dex bonus to AC while climbing
Wall DC + 20	Catch yourself while falling
Wall DC + 10	Catch a falling character*

*Requires a successful melee touch attack first.

BALANCE CHECKS AND MODIFIERS

DC	Task
Surface DC	Remain standing after taking damage while balancing

Modifier	Reason
–5	Move full speed while balancing
–5	Charge across a precarious surface*
–10	Make Balance check in place of Strength or Dexterity check to avoid being tripped**
–20	Run while balancing
+2	5 or more ranks in Tumble

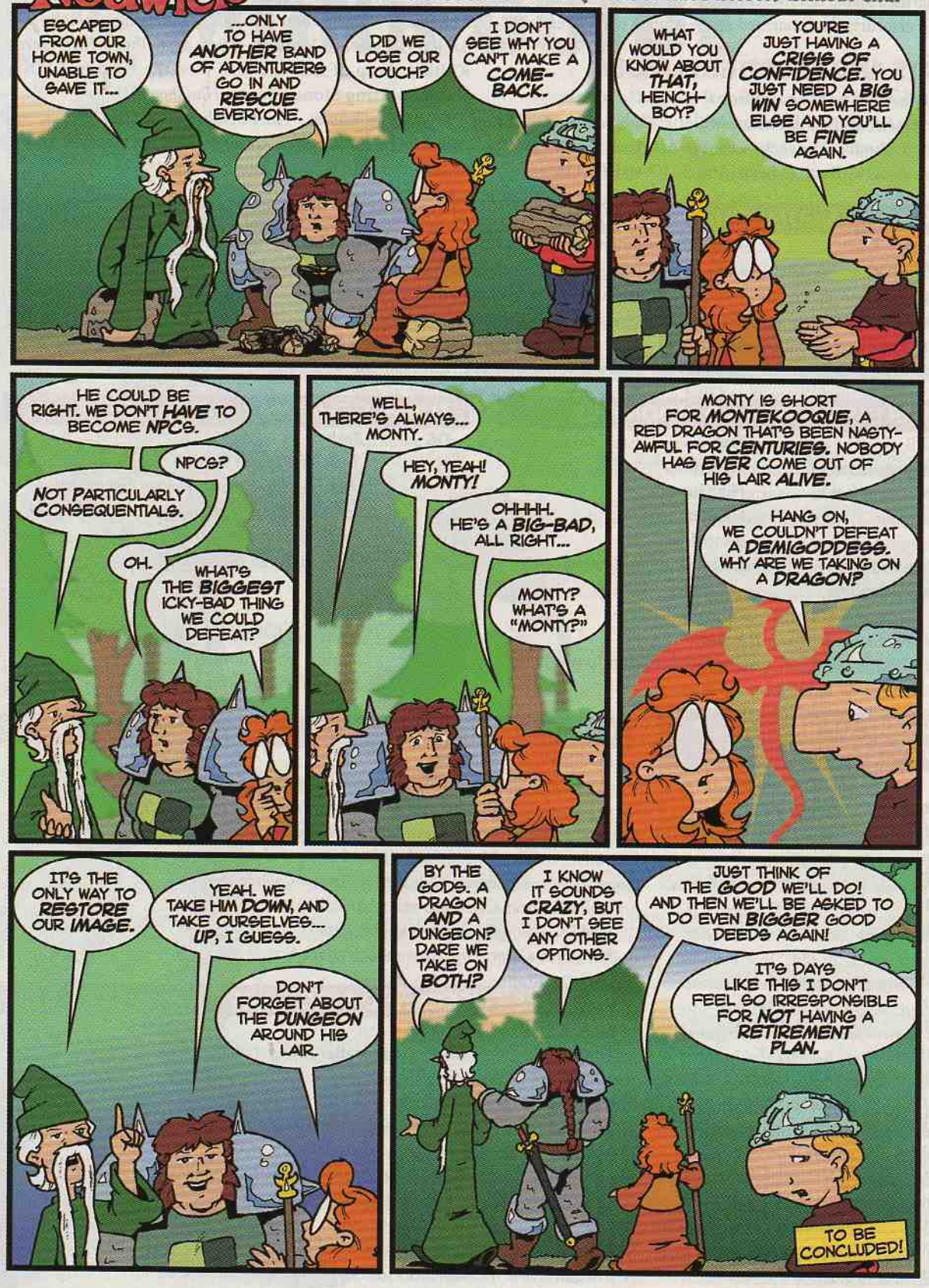
*Requires one Balance check for each multiple of your speed.

**Requires 10 ranks in Balance.

Nodwick

by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com

Matsch's Law: It's better to have a horrible ending than to have horrors without end.


ESCAPED FROM OUR HOME TOWN, UNABLE TO SAVE IT...
...ONLY TO HAVE ANOTHER BAND OF ADVENTURERS GO IN AND RESCUE EVERYONE.
DID WE LOSE OUR TOUCH?
I DON'T SEE WHY YOU CAN'T MAKE A COME-BACK.
WHAT WOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT, HENCH-BOY?
YOU'RE JUST HAVING A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE. YOU JUST NEED A BIG WIN SOMEWHERE ELSE AND YOU'LL BE FINE AGAIN.
HE COULD BE RIGHT. WE DON'T HAVE TO BECOME NPCS.
NPCS?
NOT PARTICULARLY CONSEQUENTIALS.
OH.
WHAT'S THE BIGGEST ICKY-BAD THING WE COULD DEFEAT?
WELL, THERE'S ALWAYS... MONTY.
HEY, YEAH! MONTY!
OHHHH. HE'S A BIG-BAD, ALL RIGHT...
MONTY? WHAT'S A "MONTY?"
MONTY IS SHORT FOR MONTEKOOQUE, A RED DRAGON THAT'S BEEN NASTY-AWFUL FOR CENTURIES. NOBODY HAS EVER COME OUT OF HIS LAIR ALIVE.
HANG ON, WE COULDN'T DEFEAT A DEMIGODDESS. WHY ARE WE TAKING ON A DRAGON?
IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO RESTORE OUR IMAGE.
YEAH. WE TAKE HIM DOWN, AND TAKE OURSELVES... UP, I GUESS.
DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE DUNGEON AROUND HIS LAIR.
BY THE GODS. A DRAGON AND A DUNGEON? DARE WE TAKE ON BOTH?
I KNOW IT SOUNDS CRAZY, BUT I DON'T SEE ANY OTHER OPTIONS.
JUST THINK OF THE GOOD WE'LL DO! AND THEN WE'LL BE ASKED TO DO EVEN BIGGER GOOD DEEDS AGAIN!
IT'S DAYS LIKE THIS I DON'T FEEL SO IRRESPONSIBLE FOR NOT HAVING A RETIREMENT PLAN.
TO BE CONCLUDED!

DORK TOWER®
BY JOHN KOVALIC
YOU ENTER THE LAIR OF THE GIANT SPIDER QUEEN, SHEELBA.
ALL HER HIDEOUS, GIANT SLOBBERING SPIDER MINIONS SWARM YOU!
SIR BILLINGSLY ATTACKS! HUZZAH!
THIS FIGHT SHALL GO TO THE BRAVE! I COUNTER ATTACK! HACK! SLASH! MIGHTY CLEAVE! EYE-POKIES!
THE GIANT, VENOMOUS, GROSS SPIDER MONSTERS FALL BACK, DEAD
HUZZAH!
OK. WELL, THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TONIGHT. SEE YOU GUYS NEXT WEEK!
HUZZAH AND HUZZAH!
EEEK! EEEEEEK! EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEK! A DADDY-LONGLEGS IS IN THE BATHTUB! SQUISH IT FOR ME! SQUISH IT FOR ME! SQUISH IT FOR ME! EEEEEK!
KOVALIC

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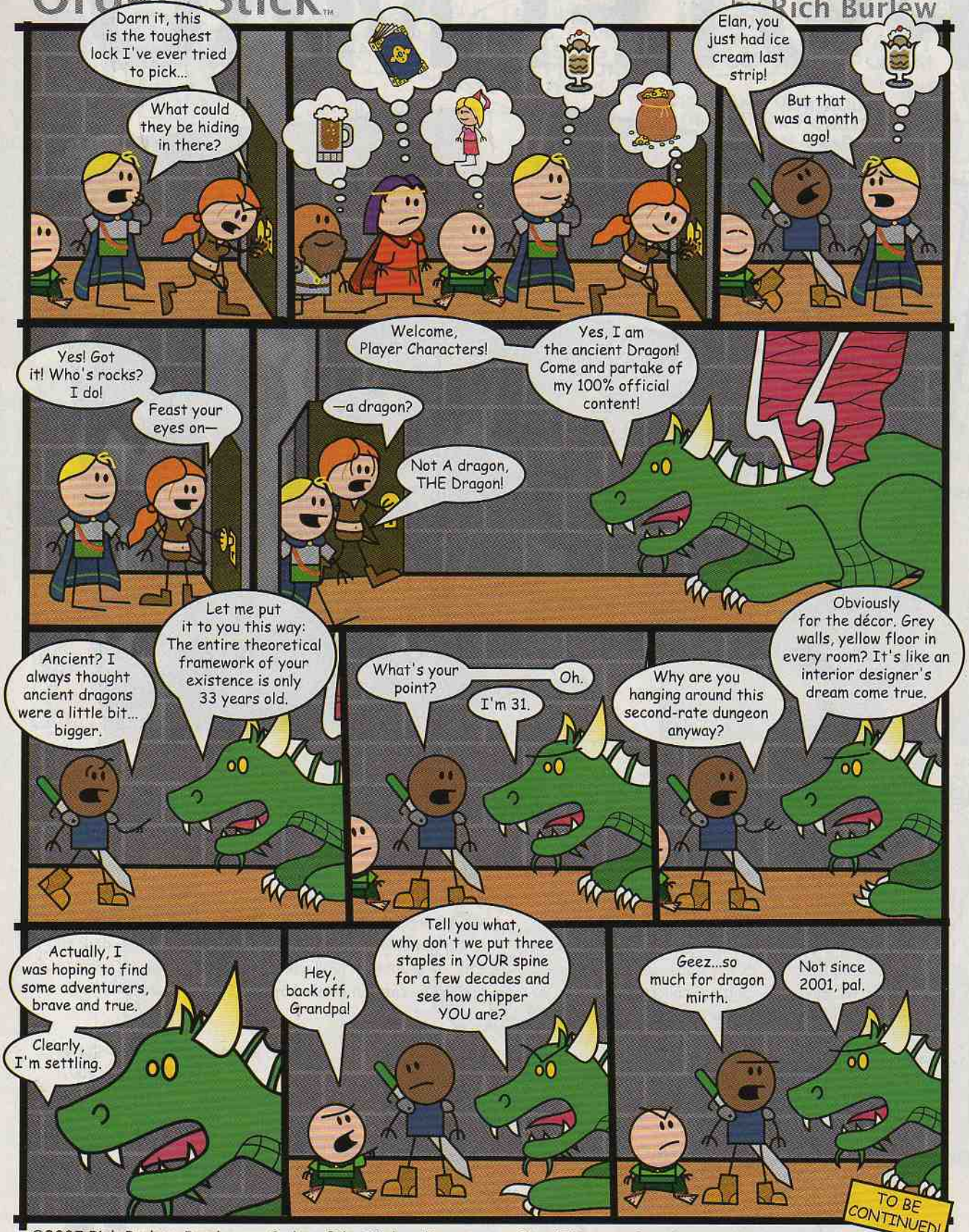
The Order of the Stick™

by Rich Burlew


Darn it, this is the toughest lock I've ever tried to pick...
What could they be hiding in there?
Elan, you just had ice cream last strip!
But that was a month ago!
Yes! Got it! Who's rocks? I do!
Feast your eyes on—
—a dragon?
Not A dragon, THE Dragon!
Welcome, Player Characters!
Yes, I am the ancient Dragon! Come and partake of my 100% official content!
Ancient? I always thought ancient dragons were a little bit... bigger.
Let me put it to you this way: The entire theoretical framework of your existence is only 33 years old.
What's your point?
Oh.
I'm 31.
Why are you hanging around this second-rate dungeon anyway?
Obviously for the décor. Grey walls, yellow floor in every room? It's like an interior designer's dream come true.
Actually, I was hoping to find some adventurers, brave and true.
Clearly, I'm settling.
Hey, back off, Grandpa!
Tell you what, why don't we put three staples in YOUR spine for a few decades and see how chipper YOU are?
Geez...so much for dragon mirth.
Not since 2001, pal.
TO BE CONTINUED!

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